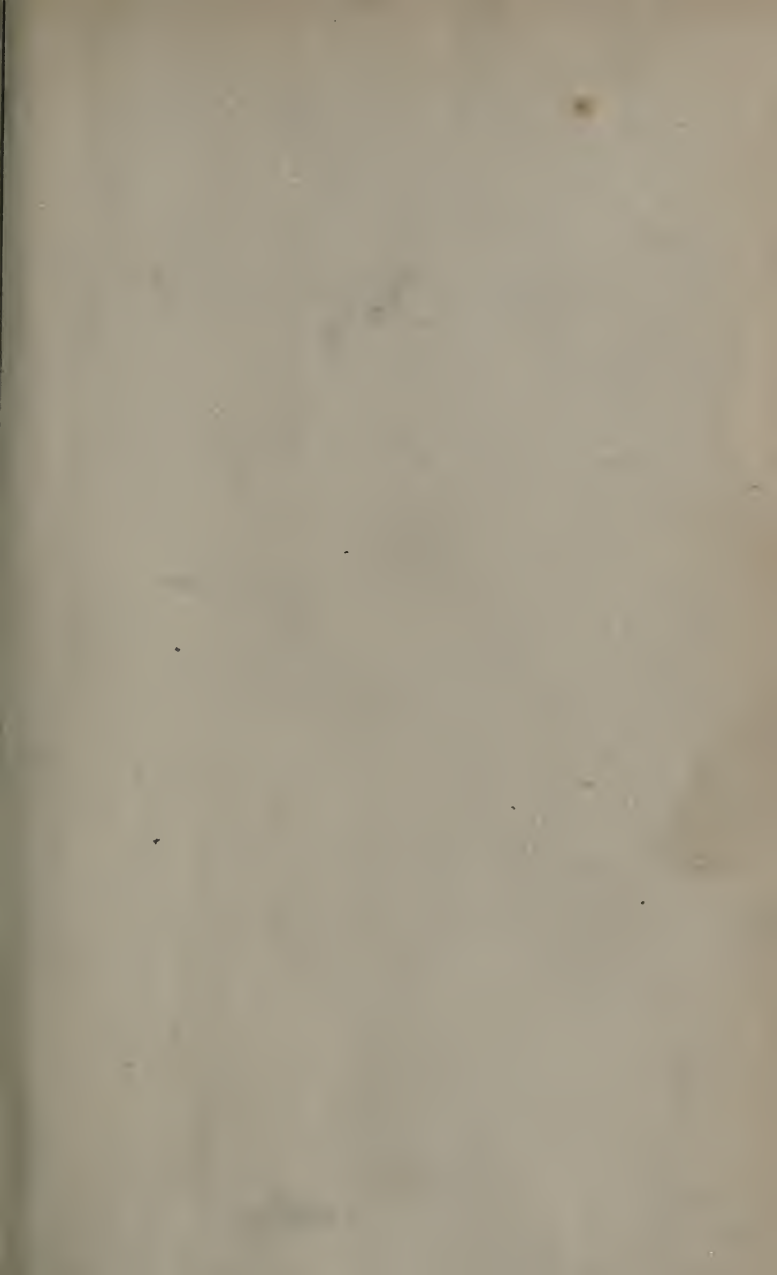




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HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

IN M.DCC.LXXXIX.

TO THE RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN M.DCCC.XV.

BY ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.E.

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ADVANCE OF NAPOLEON TO MOSCOW.

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HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

FIRST INVASION OF SPAIN BY WELLINGTON.
JAN.—NOV. 1812.

THE close of the year 1811 and commencement of 1812, witnessed the elevation of the power of Napoleon to its highest point; and such was the magnitude of the forces then at his disposal, and the paralysis which had seized the minds of men from the unbroken career of his success, that his empire appeared established on a foundation which could never be shaken. Every continental state had successively attempted to combat it, and every one had been overthrown in the struggle: The alliance of Russia and Austria in 1805, of Russia and Prussia in 1806, of Spain and Austria in 1809, had been alike unable to restrain the rapid and portentous growth of his power. From pacific repose he rose up, like a giant refreshed by sleep, more formidable in numbers and organisation than when the last strife terminated; from warlike struggles he emerged conquering and to conquer. It was hard to say whether his power had risen more rapidly in peace or in war; it was difficult to see what limit could be imposed to the growth of an empire to which the former brought only an increase of hostile preparations, the latter an enlargement of pacific resources.

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LXVIII.

1812.

1.

Vast power
and resources
of Napoleon
at this period.

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1812.

2.

Successive
destruction of
all the powers
arrayed
against him.

The systematic exertions of military monarchies, and the tumultuous array of popular enthusiasm, had been alike overthrown in the strife. Little could be hoped from the former, when the heroism of Aspern had failed; nothing expected from the latter, when the devotion of Saragossa had been subdued. The hopes awakened by the retreat from Torres Vedras had been chilled by subsequent disasters: the subjugation of the east of Spain seemed to presage the speedy concentration of an overwhelming force against the battalions of Wellington in the west; and if he succumbed, nothing remained, from the shores of the Vistula to the Pillars of Hercules, capable of combating the French power, or resisting the imperial will. A general despair, in consequence, seized upon the public mind over all Europe. Even the bravest hearts hesitated as to the ultimate issue of a contest in which former continental effort had terminated only in disaster; and many ages of military servitude were regarded by the strongest heads as the inevitable destiny of Europe, to be overthrown, perhaps, at last only by a fresh deluge of northern barbarians.*

It was at this dark and mournful period, that a clergyman of the Church of England thus addressed a British congregation: "There is a limit, my brethren, to human suffering; there is an hour in oppression when resolution

* "Those cursed, double cursed news, have sunk my spirits so much, that I am almost disbelieving a Providence. God forgive me! But I think some evil demon has been permitted in the shape of this tyrannical monster, whom God has sent on the nations visited in his anger. The Spaniards may have Roman pride, but they want Roman talent to support it: and in short, unless God in his mercy should raise up amongst them one of those extraordinary geniuses, who seem created for the emergencies of an oppressed people, I confess I see no hope. The spring-tide may, for aught I know, break upon us in the next session of parliament. There is an evil fate upon us in all we do at home or abroad."—SIR WALTER SCOTT to ELLIS, 13th December 1808, and September 14, 1809.—LOCKHART'S *Life of Scott*, ii. 225, 227, 253.

To the same purport, Sir James Mackintosh said at this period, writing to Gentz at Vienna:—"I believe, like you, in a resurrection, because I believe in the immortality of civilisation; but when, by whom, and in what form, are questions which I have not the sagacity to answer, and on which it would be boldness to hazard a conjecture. A dark and stormy night, a black series of ages, may be prepared for our posterity before the dawn that opens the more perfect day. Who can tell how long that fearful night may be before the dawn of a brighter morrow? The race of man may reach the promised land: but there is no assurance that the present generation will not perish in the wilderness. The mischief has become too intricate to be unravelled in our day. An evil greater than despotism, even in its worst and most hideous form, approaches—a monarchy literally universal seems about to be established."—MACKINTOSH to GENTZ, 24th December 1806; and to WILLIAM OGILVIE, ESQ., 24th February 1807; *Memoirs of Mackintosh*, i. 307 and 383.

springs from despair. There are bounds in the moral as well as the material system to the dominion of evil; there are limits to the injustice of nations as well as the guilt of individuals. There is a time when cunning ceases to delude and hypocrisy to deceive; when power ceases to overawe, and oppression will no longer be borne. To that hour, to that avenging hour, Time and Nature are approaching. The cup of bitterness is full, and there is a drop which will make it overflow. Unmarked as it may be amidst the blaze of military glory, the dread Hand is yet writing on the wall the sentence of its doom: the hour is steadily approaching when evil will be overcome with good, and when the life-blood of an injured world will collect at the heart, and by one convulsive effort throw off the load that has oppressed it. It is impossible that the oppressed can longer beckon the approach of a power which comes only to load them with heavier chains; it is impossible that the nations of Europe, cradled in civilisation and baptised into the liberty of the children of God, can long continue to bend their free-born heads before the feet of foreign domination; or that they can suffer the stream of knowledge which has so long animated their soil, to terminate at last in the deep stagnation of military despotism. Even the oppressor bleeds in the hour that he triumphs: his people are goaded to exertions which they loathe: his laurels are wet with the tears of those who have been bereaved of their children.

“For years our attention has been fixed on that great and guilty country which has been fertile in nothing but revolution; and from which, amidst the clouds that cover it, we have seen that dark and shapeless form arise, which, like the vision that appalled the king of Babylon, ‘hath its legs of iron and its arms of brass.’ Yet, while our eye strains to measure its dimensions, and our ear shrinks at the threatening of its voice, let us survey it with the searching eye of the prophet, and we shall see that its feet are of ‘base and perishable clay.’ Amidst all the terrors of its brightness, it has no foundation in the moral stability of justice. It is irradiated by no beam from Heaven; it is blessed by no prayer of man; it is worshipped with no gratitude by the patriot heart. It

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LXVIII.

1812.

3.
Remarkable
prediction of
a British
clergyman,
at this period
Feb. 28, 1811.

4.

Clear prophecy of
Napoleon's
approaching
downfall.

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LXVIII.
1812.

may remain for the time that is appointed it ; but the awful hour is on the wing when the universe will resound with its fall : and the same sun which now measures out with reluctance the length of its impious reign, will one day pour his undecaying beams amid its ruins, and bring forth from the earth which it has overshadowed the promises of a greater spring." *—That ultimate triumph of virtue over oppression which the foresight of the statesman could not venture to anticipate, and the courage of the soldier hardly dared to expect, was clearly foreseen, and confidently announced, at the darkest period of the struggle, by the undoubting voice of religious faith. The philosopher may admire the moral grandeur of the sentiments conveyed in these eloquent words ; the historian may mark the exact accomplishment which the prediction they contained was so soon to receive, and its singular felicity at the moment it was uttered : but the author trusts he will be forgiven if he feels a yet deeper interest in the voice of a revered parent—now issuing from the tomb—and gives vent to an expression of thankfulness, that he has been permitted to follow out, in the narrative of this mighty convulsion, those principles in the moral government of the world which were invariably maintained and publicly expressed by his father during the whole of its continuance.

5.
Commence-
ment at this
period of the
fall of the
French em-
pire.

The subsequent chapters of this history contain nothing but the accomplishment of this prediction. The world did indeed resound with the fall of the awful form which had overshadowed it ; and the English historian may well feel a pride at the part which his country took in this immortal deliverance. The British army was the vanguard which broke the spell which had so long entranced mankind : it was from the rocks of Torres Vedras that the French arms first permanently receded ; it was on the plains of Castile that the first mortal strokes to their empire were delivered. Before the Niemen had been crossed, the rivulet of the Albuera had run red with Gallie blood ; before Smolensko had fallen, Badajoz had yielded to the resistless assault of the English soldiery ; it was in the triumphs of Salamanca that the

* Fast Sermon, February 28, 1811, and Feb. 1806, by the Rev. ARCHIBALD ALISON, Prebendary of Sarum, &c.—*Sermons*, vol. i. 272 and 408 ; 5th edition.

Russians sought the long-wished-for omen of ultimate victory; in the recovery of Madrid that they beheld, amidst the flames of Moscow, the presage of their own deliverance.*

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LXVIII.
1812.

The first to open the career of freedom to the world, England was also the last to recede from the conflict: the same standards which had waved over its earliest triumphs, were seen above the reserve on whom the final throes of the struggle depended. Vain would have been the snows of Russia and the conquest of Leipsic, vain the passage of the Rhine and the capture of Paris, if British valour had not for ever arrested the renewed career of victory on the field of Waterloo.† And mark the extraordinary coincidence between the termination of revolutionary triumph and the commencement of righteous retribution. Both occurred at the same moment: it would seem as if a distinct line had been drawn by Omnipotence, beyond which victory should not fan the banners of guilt on the one side, nor disaster sink the spirit of virtue on the other.

6.
Exactly when
it had at-
tained its
highest ele-
vation.

“Fond, impious man! think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
Raised by thy breath, hath quench'd the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.”

On the 8th January 1812, the long series of revolutionary triumphs terminated with the fall of Valencia; and the NEXT DAY Wellington led his army across the Agueda, and commenced the career of victory which never paused till the oppressor was hurled from his throne, and the British standards waved in triumph on the walls of Paris.‡

Wellington no sooner perceived, from the dispersion of the armies of Portugal and the north, in wide cantonments on the upper Tagus and the Douro, in December 1811, that Ciudad Rodrigo was abandoned to its own

* The news of the battle of Salamanca was received by both the French and Russian armies the evening before the battle of Borodino; that of the taking of Madrid by Lord Wellington as Kutusoff was performing his circular march round Moscow, by the light of the burning capital.

† “If the English army,” said Napoleon, “had been defeated at Waterloo, what would have availed all the Russians, Austrians, or Prussians, who were crowding to the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees?”—*NAPOLEON, Memoirs*, ix. book 203.

‡ This is strictly true: every subsequent march in advance in Russia was a step towards ruin.

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LXVIII.

1812.

7.

Wellington
prepares to
besiege
Ciudad
Rodrigo.
Jan. 1812.

resources, than he judged that the favourable opportunity, so long watched for, of attacking that fortress with some chance of success, had arrived. His army, indeed, was still unhealthy. Nearly twenty thousand were yet in hospital; for though large reinforcements had arrived from England, yet the fresh regiments, in great part affected by the Walcheren fever, were far more liable to sickness than the old soldiers. The pay was three months in arrear; supplies were still got up with difficulty; and the new clothing for the troops had not yet arrived. But in all these respects he was well aware the enemy's armies were in a still worse condition; while the new positions assigned to, and now taken by them, in conformity with the orders of the French Emperor issued in November, had removed them to such a distance as rendered it doubtful whether, especially at that inclement season, any adequate force could be assembled for the relief of the fortress. Bonnet was in the Asturias; Montbrun at Alicante; and the bulk of the army of the north, now charged with the defence of Ciudad Rodrigo, in cantonments on the Douro. The better, however, to conceal his real designs, Wellington, in the close of 1811, caused Hill to assume the offensive in Estremadura; and this was done with such success by that enterprising officer, whose slightest movements were watched with the utmost anxiety since the blow of Aroyo de Molinos, that the enemy abandoned Almendralejo and Merida, and concentrated their forces towards Llerena; while the English advanced posts occupied the former town on the 2d of January, and spread themselves out in the neighbourhood of Badajoz. Such was the impression produced by this irruption into the French quarters, that Soult, conceiving Badajoz to be threatened, gave orders for assembling his forces through the whole of Andalusia, at the very moment that Wellington, having concealed his designs till the instant of their execution, was making his troops prepare fascines and gabions in their respective villages, and laying down the portable bridge over the Agueda for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.¹

All things being in readiness, the bridge was fixed on the 6th, but a heavy fall of snow prevented the troops from moving till the 8th; as if to make the termination

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xx.
281, 282.
Jones, ii. 60,
61. Belm. i.
215. Nap. iv.
369, 371.

of Napoleon's long career of conquest, by the surrender of Valencia, coincide exactly with the commencement of his fall, by the English attack on CIUDAD RODRIGO. The light division only crossed on that day, and immediately formed the investment of the fortress; in the evening an advanced redoubt, situated on the great Teson, was carried by assault: the first parallel was established on the day following; and a few days after, the convent of Santa Cruz was stormed. The garrison, alarmed at the progress of the besiegers, now made a vigorous sortie, and did considerable mischief to the head of the sap before they were repulsed; but the progress of the works was not seriously interrupted by this effort. On the same afternoon the batteries opened; and at night the fortified convent of San Francisco, which flanked the right of the trenches, was carried by a gallant escalade of the 46th regiment. At half-past four in the evening, just as darkness set in, the breaching batteries opened, and thirty heavy guns sent forth their crashing fire against the walls. "Then was beheld a spectacle at once fearful and sublime. The enemy replied to the assailants' fire with more than fifty pieces: the bellowing of eighty large guns shook the ground far and wide; the smoke rested in heavy volumes upon the battlements of the place, or curled in light wreaths about the numerous spires; the shells, hissing through the air, seemed fiery serpents leaping from the darkness; the walls crashed to the stroke of the bullet, and the distant mountains, returning the sound, appeared to moan over the falling city.^{1*}

On the three following days the fire continued with great vigour on both sides: the wall came down in huge masses, and though the besiegers were exposed to a most destructive cannonade, and the head of the trenches was wellnigh stifled by the storm of grape and shells, eleven thousand of which were discharged by the enemy, yet the progress of the ruin was very evident. By reserving all their fire for the ramparts, and not discharging a shot at the defences, the *faussebraye* was beaten down, and two large breaches were declared practicable in the ram-

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

8.

Commence-
ment of the
operations.
Jan. 9.

Jan. 13.

Jan. 14.

¹ Nap. iv.
375, 381.
Jones, ii. 60,
62. Gurw.
viii. 525, 527.
Belm. iv.
265, 271.

9.

Rapid pro-
gress of the
siege.

* NAPIER. Colonel Napier's descriptions of battles and sieges are, in some places, the finest passages that exist in that style in modern literature. Lord Londonderry's description of the same event is also uncommonly graphic and impressive.—LONDONDERRY, ii. 25.

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1812.

part on the morning of the 19th. The nearest batteries were still above two hundred yards distant, and not one of the parapets was injured, circumstances which augmented greatly the difficulties of carrying the place by storm. But Wellington was for many reasons eager for the assault; for the prize to be gained by its capture was immense, and every day added to the danger of the fortress being relieved from without. The whole siege equipage and stores of the army of Portugal were deposited in the place, and the French had no others nearer than Madrid; its capture would render any attack on Almeida or the lines of Torres Vedras impossible for a very long period; the enemy's credit would suffer by the capture of so important a stronghold under the eye of two armies, each as strong as that of the besiegers, and the British would acquire by its reduction both a frontier fortress of approved strength, and a basis for future offensive operations of inestimable importance. Marmont, too, was collecting his troops and approaching: it was known that by the 28th or 29th he would be at Salamanca, only four marches distant, with forty thousand men; and the recent failure at Badajoz told but too clearly what might be the result of prosecuting the siege according to the established rules, and waiting till the counterscarp was blown in, and the parapets commanding the breach were all levelled by the besiegers' fire. The place was accordingly summoned on the 18th, and the governor having returned a gallant answer that he would not surrender, preparations were made for the assault.¹

¹ Gurw. viii.
526, 527.
Nap. iv. 379,
383. Jones,
ii. 61, 62.
Belm. iv.
271, 277.

10.
Plan of the
Assault.

The perilous honour of this attack fell on the light and third divisions, the former under Craufurd, the latter led by Picton, whose turn it was to be that day on duty in the trenches. The latter, commanded by General M'Kinnon, preceded by the light companies, under Major Manners, was to attack the main breach; the Portuguese of the division were in reserve in the trenches, ready to advance if occasion required. The former, under General Vandeleur and Colonel Barnard, received orders to assault the lesser breach, and, as soon as they got footing on the summit, turn sharp to the right in order to take in flank the defenders of the main breach, and assail in rear the interior retrenchments by which the enemy hoped to

stop the progress of the assailants, even if they did win the rampart. This done, and a communication between the two columns being effected, an effort was to be made to burst open the Salamanca gate, and let in the rest of the division. Pack, with his brigade of Portuguese, as soon as the firing became general, was to make a false attack by escalade on the outwork of St Jago, on the opposite side of the town, which might be converted into a real one if a favourable opportunity of penetrating should occur. The 5th regiment, forming part of the third division, was to enter the ditch at its extreme right by breaking down the palisades, thence escalade the *fausse-braye*, and proceed along the foot of the rampart to the great breach; while the 94th was to leap direct into the fosse at the head of the main storming party of the third division. The storming parties received orders not to fire a shot, but push on with the bayonet; the bearers of the bags, ladders, and other engines of assault, were not even armed, lest any irregular skirmish should interfere with their smoothing the way for the other troops. The preparations of the besieged, however, were very formidable: bombs and hand-grenades lined the top of the breaches to roll down on the assailants; bags of powder were disposed among the ruins, to explode when they began to ascend the slopes; two heavy guns, charged with grape, flanked the summit of the larger breach; and a mine was prepared under it, to explode if all other defences failed. These obstacles, however, noways daunted the British troops; and the last words of Wellington's instructions breathed the spirit of the whole army as well as his own—"Ciudad Rodrigo must be carried by assault this evening at seven o'clock."¹

The evening was calm and tranquil: the moon, in her first quarter, diffused a doubtful light over the scene, which, without disclosing particular objects, rendered their rude outline distinctly visible. The projecting bastions stood forth like giants in the gloom, darkly yet clearly defined on the adjoining shadows; while in their sides, yawning gulfs, half filled up with ruins, showed where the breaches had been made and the deadly strife was to ensue. In the British lines the trenches were crowded with armed men, among whom not a whisper

¹ Jones's Sieges, i. 137, 140. Wellington to Lord Liverpool, Jan. 20, 1812. Gurw. viii. 527. Lond. ii. 259, 264. Nap. iv. 382, 384. Belm. iv. 274, 276.

11. Aspect of both sides before the assault.

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LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Jones, i.
140. Lond. ii.
263, 264.
Nap. iv. 382,
384. Belm.
iv. 177, 178.
Gurw. viii.
527, 528.

12.
The third
division carry
the great
breach.

was to be heard, nor a movement perceived; so completely had discipline, and the absorbing anxiety of the moment, subdued every unruly feeling and stilled every dauntless heart. As the great clock, however, of the cathedral tolled seven, the word was quietly passed along that all was ready; and, leaping at once out of the trenches, the men rushed forward to the breaches, led by their respective forlorn-hopes: that of the third division headed by Ensign Mackie, with the forlorn-hope, and General M'Kinnon leading the storming party; that of the light by Mr Gurwood,* followed by Colonel Colborne of the 52d, and Major Napier at the head of the storming party;—and with the exploits of these brave men began THE FALL OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE.¹

M'Kinnon's division crossed the open space between the trenches and the rampart, under a tempest of grape and musketry from the walls, and in a few minutes reached the counterscarp, which was found to be eleven feet deep. The sappers, however, instantly threw down their bags of hay, which soon diminished the depth by one-half; and the men of the 94th, hastily leaping down, arrived at the foot of the great breach. But there a most serious opposition awaited them. The shells, rolled down from the top, burst amidst the throng with frightful explosions. Every shot of the close ranks of the French infantry told with effect on the dense mass below; and when, forcing their way up the slope, the British soldiers at length reached the summit, they were torn in pieces by a terrific discharge of grape from the heavy guns within a few yards' distance on either side, which at once, like a scythe, swept the whole warlike multitude down. Before these could be reloaded, however, the men immediately behind pushed up; the 94th, headed by Colonel Campbell, leading the way, and won the ascent of the *faussebraye*. Meanwhile, the 5th had also arrived at the foot of the same defence by the ditch, and mounting it by escalade, arrived at the bottom of the great breach at the same time with the 94th. A pause for a few seconds here ensued, as the storming party which should have preceded these regiments, had not arrived; but a sergeant of

* The late Lieutenant-Colonel Gurwood, the worthy companion in arms of Wellington, who conducted the publication of his *Despatches*.

the 5th having climbed up the rugged ledge of the wall to the right of the great breach, called out that all was clear; and both regiments, headed by their respective commanders, made a simultaneous rush up the breach, which was at once won. But just as, in the tumult of victory, they were striving to penetrate the interior retrenchments which the besieged had constructed to bar their further entrance, the mine which had been worked under their feet was suddenly exploded, and the bravest and most forward, among whom was the gallant M'Kinnon, were blown into the air. Still the column which had won the great breach held the ground they had gained, though they found it impossible to penetrate farther into the town from the obstacle of the inner retrenchments. Two deep ditches had been cut in the rampart to the right, the first of which was passed by the grenadiers of the 94th, led by Lieutenant Caneh; but the second proved an insurmountable obstacle. They therefore established themselves among the ruins to await the result of the other attacks, and soon the scarlet uniforms came pouring in on every side.¹

In the meanwhile the light division under Craufurd, and the Portuguese under Pack, were still more successful. The former had three hundred yards of glacis to cross before they reached its crest; but this distance was swiftly passed, though the gallant Craufurd received a fatal wound during the rush; the counterscarp, eleven feet deep, was leaped down in the face of a dreadful fire of grape and musketry; and the lesser breach reached. It proved, however, to be extremely steep and contracted; and when two-thirds of the ascent had been won, the struggle was so violent at the narrowest part, that the men paused, and every musket in the crowd was snapped under the instinct of self-defence, though not one was loaded. Colonel Colborne,* however, at the head of his gallant regiment, the 52d, continued to press on; and though wounded in the shoulder by a musket-ball, still led his men. His major, Napier, who was at this moment struck down by a grape-shot, called to the troops to trust to their bayonets. The officers all at once sprang to the

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1812.

¹ Lond. il.
264, 265.
Nap. iv. 383,
385. Gurw.
viii. 527, 528.
Belm. iv. 277,
278. United
Serv. Jour.
Aug. 1833,
543; and
Jones's
Sieges, i. 141,
143.

13.
Storm of the
lesser breach.

* Afterwards the officer who headed the decisive charge of the 52d at Waterloo, now Lord Seaton, whose important services in Canada have so deservedly raised him to the British peerage.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Baird's
Report, Aug.
8, 1812.
Belm. iv. 291,
Lond. ii. 264,
265. Nap. iv.
333, 334.
Gurw. viii.
527, 528.
Belm. iv.
278, 279.

front, and the summit was won. Then arose a loud shout from every quarter; for Pack's Portuguese at the same moment had escalated the walls on the opposite side. The light division now pushed on in great numbers, and, not forgetting their orders, turned sharp to the right, and with loud cheers assaulted in flank the retrenchment at the great breach, where the third division had been arrested; and by a mighty effort of both united, the barriers were burst through, and the troops rushed in. Some irregular fighting occurred in the streets, but no farther systematic resistance was attempted; and Mr Gurwood, who, though wounded, had maintained his post at the head of the third division when they carried the breach, received the governor's sword, the deserved reward of his heroism, at the gate of the castle.¹*

14.
Hideous disorders consequent on the storm.

A frightful scene of plunder, intoxication, and violence, immediately ensued. The firing, which ceased for a moment when the tumult at the breaches subsided, was now renewed in the irregular way which denoted the commencement of riot and disorder; and shouts and screams on all sides were fearfully intermingled with the groans of the wounded. The churches were ransacked, the wine and spirit cellars pillaged, and brutal intoxication spread in every direction. Soon the flames were seen bursting forth in several quarters; some houses were burned to the ground, others already ignited; and it was only by the intrepidity of a few officers and soldiers, whose coolness deserves the highest praise, that a fire, wantonly lighted in the midst of the great powder magazine, was extinguished. By degrees, however, the drunken men dropped down from excess of liquor, or fell asleep; the efforts of the officers and fresh divisions which Wellington instantly ordered into the town, were incessant to restore order; the houses on fire, and not consumed, were happily saved; and before morning a degree of order was restored which could hardly have been hoped for by those who witnessed the first license consequent

* For some particulars of this assault, the author is indebted to the kindness of Major Caneh, fort-major of Edinburgh Castle, who was actively engaged in it, and was the first man who mounted the rampart of Badajoz, to whom he is happy to make this public acknowledgment. For the particulars of the delivery of the governor's sword to Colonel Gurwood, see the original letters of Gurwood and Colonel Hussion, the French commander of artillery, in the *United Service Journal*, May 1843.

upon victory. Yet even in these moments of unbridled passion, when the national vice of drunkenness appeared in its most frightful colours, some redeeming qualities were displayed. Though all who combated were put to death without mercy, yet the unresisting every where received quarter; no slaughter, either of the citizens or enemy took place; and of a garrison consisting only of eighteen hundred men at the commencement of the siege, full fifteen hundred, still unwounded, were made prisoners.¹

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1812.

¹ Nap. iv.
386. Lond. ii
256. 267.
Belm. iv. 279

The storming of Ciudad Rodrigo was one of the most brilliant exploits of the British army, and from none have greater or more splendid results immediately flowed. A hundred and fifty guns, including the whole battering train of Marmont's army, and immense stores of every kind, fell into the hands of the allies, who had to lament the loss of thirteen hundred men, including two heroes cut off early in their career, Generals Craufurd and M'Kinnon. But it was not the material results, great and important as they were, which constituted its principal value. The moral influence with which it was attended was far more important. Wellington had now carried the frontier fortress of Spain, in the face of sixty thousand men hastening from the army of Portugal and the north to raise the siege. In the depth of winter he had thrown a portable bridge over the Agueda, and collected his troops and battering train with such secrecy and celerity, that the breaching batteries had opened their fire before the enemy had advices of the commencement of the enterprise, and the place was carried before they had begun to march for its relief. It was now evident that he had, for the first time since the Peninsular war commenced, obtained the ascendancy over his enemies; and that, with the initiative in operation, the war was to be carried into the territory occupied by the enemy. Nor was the proof afforded of the increased proficiency of the English in the art of war, and their improved skill in the multifarious duties connected with its successful prosecution less gratifying or less prophetic of a revolution in the contest. Ciudad Rodrigo had been taken by storm after a siege of twelve days, in the depth of winter, by an army of forty thousand men; whereas Massena, with one

15.
Vast impor-
tance of this
capture.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Nap. iv.
386, 390.
Jones, ii. 64,
67. Gurw.
viii. 542.

16.
Agitation it
produced
among the
French
generals.

of eighty thousand, had been detained before its walls six weeks in the height of summer. The intelligence of this unlooked-for success, therefore, excited the most enthusiastic joy in all the allied capitals. The democrats of Cadiz already in secret correspondence with the French, were for the time overpowered; and the English general was created Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo amidst the unanimous acclamations of the Cortes and people. The Portuguese government forgot its jealousy of English interference, and conferred upon him the title of Marquis of Torres Vedras; while the thanks of the British parliament were voted to the army; and a pension of £2000 a-year was settled on the earldom of Wellington.¹

Great was the consternation produced among the French generals by the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo. Marmont had arrived with the divisions under his immediate orders at Valladolid, to take the command of the newly organised army of Portugal on the 13th of January, without any suspicion of what was going forward; and it was not till late in the evening of that day that he learned that the British had crossed the Agueda. Instantly orders were despatched to the troops in all directions to assemble. Bonnet was to hasten from the Asturian mountains; Brennier from the valley of the Tagus; Dorsenne to call in all the detached parties which were on the banks of the Douro; and these troops were all to rendezvous at Salamanca on the 1st February. Meanwhile, however, not only was Ciudad Rodrigo taken, but the breaches in the walls were repaired, and provisions for six weeks thrown in; and the British general, leaving a division to secure the place, had resumed his ancient position at Fuente Guinaldo. It is impossible now to doubt that this rapid and brilliant success was mainly owing to the ill-judged dispositions of the French Emperor, who had detached Montbrun to Valencia, dislocated his armies, and given almost all their divisions a new direction, at the very time when the decisive operation was undertaken. To this also must be joined the oppressive way in which he had always carried on war, which had so desolated the country as to render the dispersion of the troops to a prodigious distance indispensable in order to their subsistence.² But it was never his custom to take blame to himself,

² Belm. iv.
216, 217.
Berthier to
Marmont,
Feb. 11, 1812.
Berthier to
Marmont,
Feb. 18, 1812.
Belm. i. App.
No. 88, 91.

where he could, by possibility, throw it upon others ; and his ill-humour at this disaster exhaled in violent invectives against both Marmont and Dorsenne, though it was his own directions which had left to neither the means of averting it.*

No sooner had Wellington put Ciudad Rodrigo in a situation of defence against any sudden attack, than he turned his eyes towards BADAJOZ, the remaining frontier fortress, which it was necessary that he should reduce before attempting his meditated invasion of the interior of Spain. As this enterprise required the united strength of the whole army, Ciudad Rodrigo, after having been repaired and provisioned for six weeks, was delivered over to Don Julian Sanchez, with his division of guerillas ; and the Spanish government was warned in the strongest manner of the necessity of taking immediate steps to have the breaches thoroughly repaired, and provisions for at least six months thrown into it. Meanwhile preparations were made for the siege with all imaginable activity ; but as the French marshals were now thoroughly alarmed by the blow struck at Ciudad Rodrigo, and Soult, in particular, was sensitively alive to any demonstrations against Badajoz, they required to be conducted with all imaginable secrecy. The battering train and engineers were accordingly embarked at Lisbon as if for Oporto ; and at sea they were re-shipped on board small craft, privately sent out from different parts of the coast, to elude attention, and sent up the river Caldao, in the Alentejo, to Alsacer do Sal, where

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1812.

17.

Secret preparations made against Badajoz.

* "The Emperor is highly displeased at the negligence you have evinced in the affair of Ciudad Rodrigo. Why had you not advices from it twice a-week ? What were you doing with the five divisions of Souham ? This is a strange mode of carrying on war ; and the Emperor makes no secret of his opinion, that the disgrace of this disaster attaches to you. It would have fallen on General Thiebault, if that general had not been able to show that he had not sufficient force to do any thing : whereas the whole division Sonham was at your disposal. This humiliating check can only be ascribed to your defective dispositions, and the want of consideration in the measures you have adopted."—BERTHIER to DORSENNE, 11th Feb. 1812 ; BELMAS, I., *App.* No. 88.

"The fall of Ciudad Rodrigo is an affront to you : and the English are sufficiently acquainted with French honour to know that that affront may become the source of a burden to them, by forcing them to preserve the prize they have won. The Emperor is far from being satisfied with your dispositions. You have the superiority over the enemy ; and instead of taking the initiative, you are always on the defensive. You fatigue and harass your troops without doing any thing : that is not the way to carry on war. Never mind Hill and the army of the south : that army is strong enough to combat five divisions of the English army. You should have marched on Ciudad Rodrigo, and retaken it before the breaches were filled up or the place provisioned."—BERTHIER to MARMONT, 18th Feb. 1812 ; *Ibid.* *App.* No. 91.

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1812.

the country carriages could, without suspicion, convey them to the banks of the Guadiana; while fascines and gabions were secretly prepared at Elvas, amidst other repairs of its ramparts, ostensibly directed to the defence of that fortress. Arrangements were at the same time made for transferring the grand supply of the army from the artery of the Douro to that of the Tagus: a temporary depot was formed at Celorico, as if for the nourishing of preparations on the Beira frontier; and a grand magazine established beyond the Douro. So completely did these preparations impose upon the French Emperor, that he entirely mistook the real point of attack; and in spite of the most urgent remonstrances of Marmont, who insisted that Badajoz was threatened, Napoleon wrote to him, "that the English general was not mad; and that an invasion on the side of Salamanca was alone to be guarded against."¹*

¹ Jones, ii.
67, 68. Nap.
iv. 392, 393.
Belm. iv.
217, 218.

18.

Movement of
the army to
that fortress.

Having thus completely outwitted the vigilance of the French Emperor, and at length completed his well-concealed preparations for the important enterprise in view, Wellington, on the 9th of March, suddenly commenced his march to the south; and the troops from all quarters converged towards Badajoz. One division of infantry alone remained on the Agueda, to succour Ciudad Rodrigo if necessary, and retard any incursion which the enemy might attempt on the Beira frontier, which was put in as good a posture of defence as circumstances would admit. The English general arrived at Elvas on the 11th, and immediately prepared to invest Badajoz; but incredible difficulties, which wellnigh proved fatal to the whole enterprise, retarded for a very considerable period the commencement of the siege. No representations which either Wellington, or his able coadjutor Mr Stuart, the

March 11.

* "You must suppose the English mad to imagine that they will march upon Badajoz, leaving you at Salamanca; that is, leaving you in a situation to get to Lisbon before them. Even if, yielding to imprudent counsels, they should move towards the south, you may at once arrest their movements by detaching one or two divisions towards the Tagus: by that you will cause yourself to be respected, and regain the initiative over the enemy. I repeat it, then: the instructions of the Emperor are precise: you are not to quit Salamanca: you are even to reoccupy the Asturias: let your headquarters be at Salamanca; and never cease to menace the English from thence."—BERTHIER to MARMONT, 11th February 1812.—These instructions were repeated in still stronger terms, in spite of Marmont's representations to the contrary, in another despatch of Berthier to him of 18th February 1811.—See BELMAS, i. No. 90, 91, *Appendix*.

English ambassador at Lisbon, could make, could induce the Portuguese regency to put in hazard their popularity, by making the magistrates draw forth the resources of the country for the conveyance of the ordnance and siege equipage, either from Almeida, whence some of it came, or from the river Caldao, whither the remainder had been brought by water-carriage. Hence, though the troops crossed the Tagus on a bridge of boats at Villa Velho on the 9th and 10th, it was not till the 15th that the pontoons could be thrown over the Guadiana, nor till the 17th that the investment of the fortress could be completed. The delay of these days afterwards required to be redeemed by torrents of British blood.^{1*}

To cover the siege, Hill was posted near Almendralejo with thirty thousand men, of whom five thousand were horse; while Wellington himself, with twenty-two thousand, commanded the besieging force. It was at first expected that Marmont would immediately co-operate with Soult in endeavouring to disturb the operations of the English army; but it was soon ascertained that his divisions had all marched through the Puerto de Pico, from the valley of the Tagus, into Castile, in obedience, as it is now known, to the absurd and positive orders of Napoleon; and consequently the British covering army was relieved of all anxiety except that arising from Soult, who was approaching from Andalusia. Meanwhile the operations of the besiegers were vigorously conducted; but it was soon apparent that a most desperate as well as skilful defence might be anticipated. Philippon, whose great talents in this species of warfare had been experienced in the former siege, had been indefatigable during the six months that had since elapsed, in improving the fortifications, and adding to the strength and resources of the place.²

He had five thousand men under his command, drawn by equal proportions from the armies of Marmont, Soult, and Jourdan at Madrid, in order to interest all these commanders in its defence; the old breaches were

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1812.

March 15.
March 17.
1 Nap. iv.
397, 398.
Jones, ii. 68,
69. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
24, 25.

19.
Disposition of
the troops for
the siege.

2 Jones, ii.
68, 69. Belm.
iv. 311, 314.
Nap. iv. 397,
398.

* The rich city of Evora, which had suffered so dreadfully from Loison's massacre in August 1808, (*ante*, Chap. liv. § 54,) and, from the effects of British aid, had never seen the fire of an enemy's bivouac since that time, refused to furnish a single cart.—NAPIER, iv. 397; and WELLINGTON to STUART, 9th April 1812—GURWOOD, ix. 52; WELLINGTON to LORD LIVERPOOL, 27th March 1812—GURWOOD, ix. 19.

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1812.

20.

Defensive
measures
adopted by
Philippon.

repaired, and strong additional works constructed to retard the operations of the besiegers in the quarters from whence the former attacks had been made. The ditches had been cleared out, and in some places materially deepened, as well as filled with water; the glacis was every where elevated, so as to cover the scarp of the rampart; the *tête-du-pont* on the other side of the river, ruined in the former siege, had been thoroughly repaired, and ample provisions laid in for the numerous garrison. The castle, in particular, which is situated on a rock more than a hundred feet above the level of the Guadiana, and surrounded by walls twenty-eight feet in height, was deemed perfectly secure; and what between dread of the approaching siege, and the orders of the French governor, all the inhabitants, except four or five thousand of the most indigent class, had left the place, so that no failure of provisions was to be apprehended.¹

¹ Belm. iv.
311, 319.
Jones, ii. 68,
69. Nap. iv.
397, 401.

21.

Commence-
ment of the
siege.
March 17.

These defensive preparations had rendered a renewal of the attack on Fort Christoval impossible; and therefore Wellington resolved to commence his operations against an outwork called Fort Picurina, with a view to the final attack on the rampart at the bastion of Trinidad, which could be breached from the hill on which it stood. Ground was broken against this outwork, unperceived by the enemy, in the night, and parallels established within two hundred yards of its walls. Alarmed at the progress of this approach, Philippon, two days after, ordered a sortie with fifteen hundred men, including some squadrons of cavalry, by the gates of La Trinidad. These gallant men, whose approach was covered by a thick fog, at first did great mischief in the British trenches, driving the whole working parties from their posts, sweeping away several hundred intrenching tools, and spreading confusion as far even as the bivouacs and depots in the rear. But Picton's whole division immediately ran to arms, and the enemy were ultimately driven back with the loss of above three hundred men; though the British purchased their final advantage by the loss of a hundred and fifty men, including Colonel Fletcher, the able chief of the engineers. To guard against similar checks in future, Wellington removed his reserve parks nearly half-a-mile farther back, and established a reserve guard of six field-

March 19.

pieces near the trenches, with a signal-post on a neighbouring height to give timely warning of the enemy's approach. No further attempt was made by the besieged to disturb the approaches of the British; but they had for some days a powerful ally in the rain, which descended in such floods that the trenches were filled with water, and the earth was so saturated that it was impossible to cut it into any regular form. At length on the 24th, after a deluge of four days, the atmosphere cleared up; and the investment was completed on the right bank of the Guadiana, while a heavy fire was opened from eight-and-twenty guns on the Picurina, which soon beat down the outer palisades, the British marksmen keeping up such a fire from the trenches that no man ventured to look over the parapet. The defences were injured, though not breached; but as they did not exhibit the appearance of great external strength, and time was of essential value, from the known energy of Soult, who was collecting his forces to raise the siege, it was determined, without farther delay, to endeavour to carry the fort by assault.¹

The attack was made by General Kempt with five hundred of the third division. The night was fine, and the arrangements skilfully and correctly made: but when the troops, by a sudden rush, reached the palisades, they found them so far repaired as to render entrance impossible; while a streaming fire from the top of the walls cut down all who paused at that post of danger. The crisis soon became imminent, and the carnage terrible, for the enemy's marksmen shot fast from the rampart; the alarm-bells in the town rang violently, and the guns of the castle opened in rear on the struggling mass of the assailants. Amidst this fearful tumult the cool courage of Kempt skilfully directed the attack: the troops were drawn round to the part of the fort sheltered from the fire; the reserves were quickly brought up, and sent headlong in to support the front. The shock was irresistible; in an instant the scaling ladders were applied, and the assailants with loud cheers mounted the rampart; while at the same time the axe-men of the light division discovered the gate in the gorge, and, hewing down the barriers, also burst in on the side next the place. So sudden was the onset, so vehement the fight, that the

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1812.

March 24.

March 25.
¹ Behn. iv.
319, 329.
Nap. iv. 406,
408. Jones,
ii. 70, 71.
Gurw. ix. 6,
17. Jones,
Sieges, i. 175,
186.

22.
Storming of
Fort
Picurina.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

1 Belm. i.
329, 331.
Nap. iv. 409,
410. Jones,
ii. 70, 71;
and Sieges, i.
189, 191.
Gurw. ix. 18,
19.

garrison, in the confusion, forgot, or had not time to roll over the shells and combustibles arranged on the ramparts. The British lost above three hundred and fifty men in this heroic assault, which lasted an hour; but it contributed essentially to the progress of the siege; for Philippon had calculated upon retarding the besiegers four or five days longer by this outwork, and if the assault had not taken place on that day, this would actually have happened, as the loopholed gallery in the counterscarp and the mines would by that time have been completed.¹

23.
Preparations
for an assault
of the for-
tress.
March 26.

No sooner did Philippon learn the capture of the fort, than he opened a tremendous fire upon it from every gun on the bastions which could be brought to bear, and with such effect that the lodgment effected in it was destroyed. As the troops could not remain in the work, a sally to retake it with three battalions was attempted, but was quickly repulsed. On the following night, however, the men were got under cover, and the second parallel being completed in advance of the fort, enfilading and breaching batteries were erected in it; and after five days' continued firing, the sap being pushed up close to the walls, the Trinidad bastion crumbled under the repeated strokes of the bullet, and soon three large yawning chasms appeared in its walls. By the morning of the 6th they were all declared practicable; and though the counterscarp was still entire, and the most formidable preparations were evidently making to retrench the summits of the ruined parts of the rampart, yet, as Soult was now approaching from Andalusia, and Marmont had concentrated his whole force at Salamanca, from whence he was expected to menace Ciudad Rodrigo, into which the Spaniards had never yet, notwithstanding the urgent representations of Wellington, thrown any provisions, the British general determined to hazard an assault on the following day.²

2 Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
March 27,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 16, 20.
Nap. iv. 412,
415. Belm.
iv. 333, 349.
Jones, ii. 71,
and Gurw. ix.
31.

24.
Plan of
attack of the
fortress
itself.

The plan of attack was suited to the magnitude of the enterprise, the extent of the preparations for repelling it which had been made by the garrison, and the known courage and ability both of the governor and his followers. On the right, Picton's division was to file out of the trenches, to cross the Rivillas rivulet, and endeavour to scale the castle walls, notwithstanding their rocky elevation and imposing height, as soon as the tumult at the

breaches had drawn the principal attention of the enemy to the other side of the fortress. On the left, Leith's division was to make a feint on the near Pardaleras outwork, and a real attack, by escalade, on the more distant San Vincente bastion, though the glacis was there mined, the ditch deep, the scarp twenty-eight feet high, and the ramparts lined with bold and determined men. In the centre, the fourth and light divisions, under General Colville and Colonel Barnard, were to assault the breaches. Like the other columns of assault, they were furnished with ladders and axes, and preceded by storming parties of five hundred men, led by their respective forlorn-hopes. The light division was to assail the bastion of Santa Maria, the fourth that of Trinidad; and the two together were nearly ten thousand strong. But they had need of all their strength: for the enemy was at once numerous and skilful, elated by former success, and confident of present victory; the ramparts were lofty, the breaches steep and narrow, and Philippon's skill had prepared the most direful means of destruction for the dark and massy columns that stood in the British lines, with hearts beating for the assault.¹

Sixteen chosen companies were charged with the defence of the three breaches, and were arrayed behind the parapets which had been constructed on the *terrepleine* of the ramparts; immediately behind them was placed a strong battalion, in a retrenchment which had been formed in the rear of the menaced bastion; a company of sharpshooters occupied a raft which was floated in the inundation that immediately adjoined the foot of the breaches and flanked the assaulting columns; and another battalion was in reserve at the gate of Trinidad, ready to carry succour to any point which might require it. Every soldier had four loaded muskets beside him, to avoid the delay of charging them at the critical moment; shells were arranged in abundance along the parapet, to roll down on the assailants the moment they entered the ditch; heavy logs were provided, to crush whole files by their descending weight; and at the summit of each breach an immense beam of wood, sunk three feet deep into the earth at either extremity, was placed, thickly studded with sword-blades, with the sharp ends turned outwards, so as to defy

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1 Wellington's instructions. April 6, 1812. Gurw. ix. 36, 38. Nap. iv. 417, 419. Jones, ii. 71, 72; and Sieges, i. 212, 217. Belm. iv. 348, 349.

25.
Philippon's preparations for defence.

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¹ Belm. iv.
349, 350.
Nap. iv. 419,
421. Jones,
ii. 75.

26.
Assault of
the great
breaches.

entrance alike to strength and courage. Similar preparations, with the exception of the sword-blades, were made at the castle and at the bastion of San Vincente, which were menaced by escalade; and pits were dug, in considerable numbers, at the foot of the great breach, to entangle or suffocate the brave men who might have descended into the fosse. Relying on these preparations, and their own conscious resolution, the French soldiers confidently looked down from their lofty ramparts on the dark columns of the distant enemy, who were arrayed for the assault; and many a gallant breast there throbbed not less ardently than those of the British host, for the decisive moment which was to decide this long-continued duel between the two nations.¹

It was intended that the whole points should be assailed at once, and ten o'clock was the hour assigned for the attack. But a bomb having burst close to the third division, destined for the assault of the castle, and discovered their position, Picton was obliged to hurry on his assault: and as the ramparts now streamed out fire in all directions, the fourth and light divisions could no longer be restrained, but silently and swiftly advanced towards the breaches. At the same time, the guard in the trenches, leaping out with a loud shout, enveloped and carried the little outwork of San Roque, by which the column attacking the castle might have been enfiladed in flank. They were discovered, however, as they reached the crest of the glacis, by the accidental explosion of a bomb, and its light showed the ramparts crowded with dark figures and glittering arms, which the next instant were shrouded in gloom. Still not a shot was fired on either side. Silently the hay packs were let down, the ladders placed to the counterscarp, and the forlorn-hopes and storming parties descended into the fosse. Five hundred of the bravest were already down and approaching the breaches, when a stream of fire shot upwards into the heavens, as if the earth had been rent asunder. Instantly a crash, louder than the outburst of a volcano, was heard in the ditch, and the explosion of hundreds of shells and powder-barrels blew the men beneath to atoms. For a moment only the light division paused on the edge of the crater;² then, with a shout which drowned even

¹ Nap. 420,
422. Jones,
ii. 72. and
Sieges, i. 219,
220. Belm.
iv. 350, 351.

the roar of the artillery, they leaped down into the fiery gulf, while at the same moment the fourth division came running up, and poured over with the like fury.

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And now a scene ensued unparalleled even in the long and bloody annals of the revolutionary war. Boiling with intrepidity, the British columns came rushing on; and, the rear constantly urging on the front, pushed down, no one knew how, into the ditch. Numbers, from keeping too far to the right, fell into the part inundated, and were drowned; but the dead bodies filled up the ditch and formed a ghastly bridge, over which their comrades passed.* Others, inclining to the left, came to the dry part, and escaped a watery grave; but they did so only to fall into the still more appalling terrors of fire. The space into which both divisions had now descended was a fosse of very confined dimensions, with the enemy's rampart in front and on both flanks: so that the troops, crowded together in a narrow space at the bottom, were exposed to a plunging cross-fire on every side except their rear, where stood a ravelin filled with British soldiers, whose loud cheers and incessant though ineffectual fire against the parapets, rather augmented than diminished the general confusion. The enemy's shouts also, from the breaches and walls, were loud and terrible; and the bursting of the shells, the explosion of the powder-barrels, the heavy crash of the descending logs, the continued stream of fire from the ramparts, the roaring of the guns from either flank, and the distant thunder of the parallel batteries, which still threw howitzers on the breaches, formed a scene of matchless sublimity and horror.¹

27.
Terrific
struggle at
their foot.

¹ Nap. iv.
424, 426.
Belm. iv. 350,
351. Jones,
ii. 72, 73.
Welling. to
Lord Liver-
pool, April 7,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 41, 42.

Still, even in this awful situation the gallantry of the officers and the devotion of the men prompted them to the most heroic efforts: the loud shouts of defiance from the enemy were answered by vehement cheers even from dying lips, and roused the English to maddened efforts; again and again bands of daring leaders, followed by the bravest of their followers, rushed up the breaches, and, despite every obstacle, reached the summits. Vain attempt! The ponderous beams, thickly studded with sword-blades, barred any farther progress; the numerous

28.
Which, de-
spite every
effort, is un-
successful.

* "Ce n'est que par le grand nombre qui sont noyés que le passage en est permis aux autres."—BELMAS, iv. 351.

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Life of
Picton, ii.
106, 107.
Philippon's
Official
Account.
Belm. iv. 419.
Jones' Sieges,
i. 221, 223.

spikes scattered among the ruins transfixing their feet; discharges of grape and musketry, within pistol-shot on either flank, tore down their ranks; and even the desperation of the rear, who strove to force the front forward, in order to make a bridge of their writhing bodies, failed in shaking the steady girdle of steel. Some even strove to make their way under it, and, having forced their heads through, had their brains beat out by the but-ends of the enemy's muskets. Never since the invention of fire-arms had such a slaughter taken place within so narrow a space. For two hours the men continued in that living grave, disdaining to retreat, unable to advance; and it was not till two thousand had fallen in this scene of horror, that by Wellington's orders they retired to re-form for a second assault.¹

29.
The castle is
assaulted by
Picton.

While this tremendous conflict was going on at the breaches, a struggle of a different, but hardly less violent kind, took place at the castle. There Picton's division were no sooner discovered by the explosion of the bomb among their ranks, than the whole moved forward at a steady pace, about half an hour before the fight began at the breaches. They crossed the stream of the Rivillas by single file, under a terrible fire from the ramparts; for the enemy brought every gun and musket to bear on the advancing mass, and the light which spread on all sides showed each man as clear as day. Rapidly forming on the other side, they rushed quickly up the rugged steep to the foot of the castle wall. There Kempt, who had hitherto headed the assault, was struck down, and Picton was left alone to conduct the column. To the soul of a hero, however, he united the skill of a general; and well were both tried on that eventful night. Soon the palisades were burst through, and in ran Picton followed by his men; but when they got through and reached the foot of the wall, the fire, almost perpendicular, was so violent that the troops wavered: in an instant the loud voice of their chief was heard above the din calling on them to advance, and they rushed on, bearing on their shoulders the ponderous scaling ladders, which were immediately raised against the wall.²

2 Nap. iv.
420, 421.
Picton's
Mem. ii. 96,
99. Belm. iv.
350. Jones'
Sieges, i. 220.

Down in an instant, with a frightful crash, came huge logs of wood, heavy stones, shells, and hand-grenades;

while the musketry with deadly effect was plied from above, and the bursting projectiles, illuminating the whole battlements, enabled the enemy to take aim with unerring accuracy. Several of the ladders were broken by the weight of the throng who pressed up them; and the men, falling from a great height, were transfixed on the bayonets of their comrades below, and died miserably. Still fresh assailants swarmed round the foot of the ladders; hundreds had fallen, but hundreds remained eager for the fray. Macpherson of the 45th, and Pakenham,* reached the top of the rampart, but were instantly and severely wounded and thrown down. Picton, though wounded, called to his men that they had never been defeated, and that now was the time to conquer or die. "If we cannot win the castle," said he, "let us die upon the walls." Animated by his voice, they again rushed forward, but again all the bravest were struck down. Picton himself was badly wounded; and his men, despite all their valour, were obliged to recoil, and take shelter under a projection of the hill.¹

The assault seemed hopeless, when the reviving voice of Picton again summoned his soldiers to the attack; and he directed it a little to the right of the former attempt, where the wall was somewhat lower, and an embrasure promised some facility for entrance. There a young hero, Colonel Ridge of the 5th, who had already distinguished himself at Ciudad Rodrigo, sprang forward, and calling on the men to follow, himself mounted the first ladder. "Canch," said he at the same time, "won't you lead the 5th?"† As quick as lightning, the latter ascended the steps of another ladder; his broadsword was in guard above his head; his trusty grenadier bayonets projected from behind on either side; and he was first on the summit. Ridge in a few seconds mounted the adjoining ladder ten yards to his left, and both stood side by side on the ramparts. The shouting troops pressed up after them, and the castle was won. Speedily the enemy were driven through the inner gate into the town;² but a rein-

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30.

Who is at
first repulsed
with great
loss.

¹ Picton's
Memoirs, ii.
96, 103. Nap.
iv. 420, 421.
Subaltern,
172. Belm.
iv. 350, 351.
Jones's
Sieges, i. 220,
221.

31.

It is at length
carried.

² Picton's
Memoirs, ii.
101, 103.
Nap. 420,
421. Belm. iv.
354, 355.
Philippon's
Official Ac-
count. Belm.
iv. 420, 421.

* Afterwards Sir Edward Pakenham.

† Lieutenant Canch of the grenadiers, 5th regiment, now Fort-major of Edinburgh Castle; who, when he mounted the rampart of the Castle of Badajoz, was suffering under a gunshot wound, yet unclosed, received on the summit of the great breach of Ciudad Rodrigo.—*United Service Journal*, August 1833, p. 545.

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forcement arrived from the French reserve; a sharp firing took place at the gate, and Ridge fell in the glorious sepulchre which his sword had won. The enemy made but a slight resistance in the castle after the ramparts were gained, but the fighting was still severe in other quarters; and Philippon, deeming the escalade of the castle impossible, disbelieved the officer who brought the account of it, and delayed to send succours till the English had established themselves in their important conquest.

32.
Walker's
division also
gets in by
escalade.

While these furious combats were going on at the breaches and in the castle, Walker, with his brigade, was escalading the distant bastion of San Vincente, so that the town was literally girdled with fire. They got near to the counterscarp undiscovered, and immediately, by means of their ladders, began to descend into the ditch; but at that moment the moon shone out, they were observed, and a heavy fire began from the walls. The Portuguese in the division immediately threw down their ladders and fled; but the British pushed on, and soon reached the foot of the rampart. It proved, however, to be thirty feet high; the ladders were too short; a mine was sprung beneath their feet; the fire from the walls was quick and deadly; and logs of wood and shells thrown over, crushed or tore in pieces whole companies at once. Fortunately, during the alarm occasioned by the carrying of the castle, the assailants discovered a part of the scarp only twenty feet high; and there three ladders were placed against an empty embrasure. The ladders, however, were still too short, and the first man who got up, had to stoop down and draw up his comrades, after being pushed up by them. Instantly the crowds came rushing on; and Walker himself, among

¹ Philippon's Official Account, Belm. iv. 419, 422. Nap. iv. 429, 430. Belm. iv. 357, 358. Jones, ii. 73, 74, and Sieges, i. 225, 226. Gurw. ix. 43, 47. Picton's Memoirs, ii. 113.

the foremost, was struck down on the ramparts, severely but not mortally wounded. The troops immediately advanced, with a rapid step and loud cheers, towards the breaches, where the incessant roar and awful conflagration told that the struggle was still going on. Strenuously fighting, they took several bastions, when the false alarm of a mine being sprung created a panic, and they were driven back almost to the one they had first won; but a battalion left there, by a crashing volley arrested the pursuers,¹ and the troops rallying again,

fought on towards the breaches, while another body marched towards the great square of the town. There their bugles sounded an English air in the heart of Badajoz; they were answered by a similar note from the castle. Soon the breaches were abandoned, and the victors poured in from all quarters; while Philippon crossed the bridge and took refuge in Fort Christoval, where he surrendered at discretion next morning, but not till he had sent off messengers to Soult, to warn him of the disaster, in time to avert a greater one from himself.*

During the whole of this eventful night, Wellington remained in one position, near the quarries, anxiously listening to the awful roar, and receiving the accounts which the different aides-de-camp brought of the desperate resistance which the troops were encountering at the breaches. Albeit well aware of the dreadful loss which must be going forward, he calmly received the intelligence, knowing how much the fate of the war depended on perseverance at that decisive moment. At length an officer arrived from Picton's division, with intelligence that the castle was taken. "Who brings that intelligence?" said Wellington in his usual quick, decided way. "Lieutenant Tyler," said the officer. "Ah, Tyler! well—are you certain, sir?" "I entered the castle with the troops, have just left it, and General Picton is in possession." "With how many men?" "His division." "Return, sir, and desire General Picton to maintain his position at all hazards." Enthusiastic joy immediately took possession of all present; but when Wellington, at a subsequent period of the night, learned the full extent of the havoc made in his brave men, his wonted firmness gave way, and he yielded to a passionate burst of grief.¹

Five thousand men and officers had fallen in all during the siege, including seven hundred Portuguese. Of these, eight hundred were killed, and no less than three thousand five hundred had been struck down during the

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33.
Wellington's
conduct dur-
ing the
assault.

¹ Picton's
Memoirs, ii.
118, 119.
United Ser-
vice Journal
Nap. iv. 433.

* For the description of this memorable assault, I have collated the inimitable narrative of Colonel Napier with the official despatch of Wellington in Gurwood's Despatches, and the animated accounts of Colonel Jones, Sir Thomas Picton's Memoirs, and the United Service Journal; and added many important facts from Major Canch's information, and Philippon's official despatch, given, with many other valuable documents regarding the siege, in *BELMAS, Journaux des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, iv. 369, 342.

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34.

Magnitude
and impor-
tance of the
conquest.

assault—an unparalleled loss, proving alike the skill and intrepidity of the defence, and the desperate valour of the attack. But the prize was immense, and the consequences of the triumph decisive, in the end, of the fate of the Peninsula. A place of the first order, with the preservation of which the honour of three French armies had been bound up, in the best condition, garrisoned by five thousand choice troops, and commanded by an officer of equal courage and ability, had been captured after a siege of nineteen days, only eleven of which had been with open trenches: less than half the time which Suchet, with superior means for the actual siege, had consumed in the reduction of Tarragona.* One hundred and seventy heavy guns, five thousand muskets, and eighty thousand shot, were found in the place; three thousand eight hundred men, including the governor, Philippon, were made prisoners; thirteen hundred had been killed or wounded since the commencement of the siege. But what was of far more importance than even the reduction of such a fortress in such a time and with such means, Wellington had now clearly obtained the superiority over the French generals. Their two border strongholds, alike a barrier for defence and a base for offensive operations on their side, had been reduced; the path was smoothed for the English army into the heart of Spain, and the disunion already obvious between the imperial marshals might be reasonably expected to be increased rather than diminished by a disaster, which would expose them both to the torrent of the Emperor's wrath.¹

It would be well for the English historian if he could stop here, and could recount that his countrymen, after having displayed such heroic bravery in the assault, had not stained their victory by the usual excesses which, by the barbarous usages still observed in war, are so often, in the case of a town carried by assault, wreaked on the heads of the unoffending citizens. But this, unfortunately, is not the case: disorders and excesses of every sort prevailed; and the British soldiery showed by their

¹ Welling. to Lord Liverpool, April 7, 1812. Gurw. ix. 47, 49. Jones, ii. 74. Philippon's Official Account. Belm. iv. 420, 422.

35.

Disgraceful
pillage of the
town.

* Suchet broke ground before Tarragona on the 21st May, and the place was finally carried by assault on the 28th June, a period of thirty-seven days. Suchet's force, which was all engaged in the siege, (the enemy's disturbing force in the rear being very trifling,) was 21,000, Wellington's at Badajoz, 19,000.—*Vide* SUCHET'S *Memoirs*, ii. 51. 109: and *Ante*, Chap. lxx. § 71.

conduct after the storm, that they inherited their full share of the sins, as well as the virtues, of the children of Adam. The disgraceful national vice of intemperance, in particular, broke forth in its most frightful colours. All the wine-shops and vaults were broken open and plundered; pillage became universal; every house was ransacked for valuables, spirits, or wine; and crowds of drunken soldiers, for two days and nights, thronged the streets; while the breaking open of doors and windows, the report of casual muskets, and the screams of the despoiled citizens, resounded on all sides. At length, on the third day, Wellington, highly incensed at the continuance of the disorders, marched two fresh divisions into the town; a gallows was erected in the great square, a few of the worst plunderers were executed, and thus order was restored. Yet even amid these humiliating scenes many redeeming traits were exhibited; the worst characters indeed there, as on all occasions where popular passions obtain full vent, were the leaders; but hundreds risked, and many lost their lives in endeavouring to put a stop to the violence. No blood of the unresisting was shed, and comparatively few of the more atrocious crimes usual on such occasions were committed. While the French conquest of Tarragona was disgraced by the slaughter, on their own admission, of four thousand chiefly unarmed citizens,* the British storm of Badajoz exhibited the glorious trophy of as many desperate and bloodstained enemies rescued from death in the moment of hard-earned victory: the very horror which the British officers at the time felt and have since expressed at the brutal excesses of the men, only shows how repugnant such usages were to the mild and humane spirit which prevailed in the British army.¹

The Duke of Wellington said in parliament, on occasion of the Chartist insurrection at Birmingham in July 1839, that he had seen many towns in his life taken by storm, but he had never seen a town treated as that city was in that quarter where the rioters had gained the superiority.

* "Cette nuit fut horrible : le sang des Espagnols inondait les rues de cette malheureuse cité, et tout y présentait le spectacle affreux mais inévitable d'une ville prise d'assaut. Les Espagnols perdaient quatre milles hommes, tant de la garnison que des habitants."—BELMAS, *Journaux des Sièges dans la Péninsule*, iii. 547.

¹ Compare Nap. iv. 431. Jones, ii. 76, and United Service Journal, *recollection* of Badajoz.

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36.

Reflections
on the dis-
orders and
horrors after
the assault.

This observation is clearly well-founded in the sense in which it was obviously meant—viz., that no part of Badajoz, or any other town he had seen taken by assault, was treated so horribly as that part of Birmingham was where the rioters got the mastery: for if the Chartists had had possession of that town for three days, as the troops had of Badajoz, they would have burned and destroyed the whole edifices it contained. In two hours three hundred Chartists in the Bull-ring burned three houses, gutted thirty, and consumed by fire the whole furniture which they had dragged out before the eyes of the owners; while nothing but plunder and intoxication, with a few casual conflagrations, took place at Badajoz, even during the three days the disorders lasted. Memorable examples of the increasing moderation which the humanity of recent times had infused even into the most awful of all moments, that of a town taken by assault, and of the furious passions which democratic delusion had in the same era spread among the corrupted members of an opulent and pacific community!

37.

Soult's ad-
vance from
Andalusia,
and retreat
to it.

Soult, never dreaming of this powerful fortress being carried in so short a period, that there hardly seemed to be time for the breaching batteries to have approached the body of the place, had set out from Seville, on the 31st March, with the whole force which he could collect, and debouched by Guadalcanal into the south of Estremadura on the 4th April. On the 7th he was advancing from Fuente del Maestro to Santa Marta, at no great distance from Badajoz, with twenty-five thousand men, prepared to give battle to Hill's covering force, which was just before him, when the horsemen detached by Philippon brought the intelligence of the fall of that fortress. He immediately retraced his steps with great celerity, and regained Seville by the 14th; for he was in no condition to fight the whole English army; and the Andalusian capital—which was menaced by Villemur and Morillo, who had issued out of Portugal with four thousand men, and already approached to within ten miles of it—loudly called for his protection. In the course of the retreat, however, the British horse, two thousand strong, came up with him near Usagre, and a brilliant action took place between the cavalry, under Sir Stapleton Cotton,¹ and an

April 12.

¹ Belm. i.

219, 220.

Nap. iv. 434,

435.

equal force of the enemy, who were broken and pursued four miles in great disorder, with the loss of a hundred and thirty prisoners, besides nearly as many killed and wounded.

A great game now lay before the English general, and he was strongly tempted to play it. Soult, with a disposable army of twenty-five thousand men only, was in Andalusia, and even by raising the siege of Cadiz, and exposing his troops to be assailed in rear by the powerful garrison of that city, he could only bring forty thousand into the field; and though they were among the very best troops in the French army, and commanded by one of their ablest generals, yet with forty-five thousand British and Portuguese, who were now gathered round his standards, Wellington might hope to strike a decisive blow against that important branch of the enemy's force. That he entertained this design is now proved by his despatches;¹ but he soon received intelligence from the north which compelled him to forego these prospects, brilliant though they were, and attend to the vital point of preserving his communications with his base of operations. Marmont having with infinite difficulty collected fifteen days' provisions for his troops, an indispensable preliminary to entering upon the wasted districts around Ciudad Rodrigo, had advanced from Salamanca in the beginning of April, and immediately advanced to that fortress, which he invested. Thence pushing on past Almeida, he entered Beira with above thirty-five thousand men, ravaging it with the utmost cruelty; and Trant and Wilson, who had assembled the militia of the province, even with the aid of the troops which Wellington had left to guard the frontier, were unable to offer any effectual resistance, as Silveira had not yet come up with that of Entre Douro e Minho.²

Trant, however, was not discouraged; and that enterprising officer even formed the daring design of surprising the French marshal in his headquarters at Sabugal. This was only prevented by the singular coincidence of Marmont having on the same night formed a project of carrying off the English commander, which failed from a single drummer having accidentally discovered the approach of his horsemen, and beat the alarm. The

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38.
Wellington's
project of
attacking
Soult in An-
dalusia.

¹ Gurw. ix.
42.

April 1.

² Gurw. ix.
68, 69.
Beamish, ii.
47. Belm. iv.
220.

39.
Which is pre-
vented by
Marmont's
irruption into
Beira.

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1812.

April 14.

April 15.

¹ Gur. ix. 68,
69. Belm. iv.
220. Beam.
ii. 47. Jones,
ii. 78. Nap.
iv. 445, 448.

enemy having approached Celorico, Wilson, after having remained at his post there to the last moment, retreated after having destroyed the magazines. In the retreat from that place, the French came up with the rearguard of the retiring militia near the Mondego, who immediately, despite all the efforts of their officers, dispersed and fled; and Marmont, taking advantage of the consternation, pushed on to Castello, where there were large magazines, which, however, were fortunately transported in safety to the south of the Tagus, while Victor Alten, with his German dragoons, crossed that river at Villa Velho, leaving the northern provinces wholly uncovered.¹

40.
Wellington
moves to the
Agueda.

Urgent as affairs had now become to the north of the Tagus, Wellington would not have been diverted by these predatory alarms from his great object of attacking Soult in Andalusia: but the state of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida was such as to call for immediate attention. Notwithstanding the most urgent representations of the English general, the Spanish government had taken no steps for provisioning the former of these fortresses, and the Portuguese Regency had been so remiss in their exertions for putting the latter into a good state of defence, that it was hardly secure against a *coup-de-main*. These circumstances rendered it indispensable for Wellington to return immediately to the Agueda; and accordingly, after lingering in the neighbourhood of Badajoz a few days, in the hope that Soult, stung by the loss of that fortress, would fight a battle to retrieve his credit, he broke up for the north upon finding that the French marshal had finally retired into Andalusia. The army crossed the Tagus at Villa Velho, and resumed its old position at Fuente Guinaldo: Sir Thomas Graham, who was left with a corps of ten thousand men at Badajoz, soon repaired the breaches, and put the place in a posture of defence: while Marmont retired without loss across the frontier, and put his army into cantonments at Salamanca and on the Douro.²

² Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
April 7, 1812.
Gurw. ix. 47.
Belm. 220,
221. Nap. iv.
448.

Both parties, after this short but bloody campaign, stood absolutely in need of repose; and the exhausted state of the country rendered it impossible for the British army to move before the young green crops afforded a supply of food for the horses; or the French, until the

harvest had afforded the means of replenishing the magazines of the men. Wellington employed this interval in the most strenuous exertions to put the frontier fortresses in a good state of defence; and as the supineness of the Spanish authorities inspired him with a serious dread "that he would lose both Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz before the summer was over, by the habits of indolence and delay in the Spanish nation,"¹ he took the most extraordinary measures to guard against the danger. With this view, he laid on the Portuguese government the personal responsibility of victualling Elvas and Badajoz, and employed the whole of the carriages and mules belonging to his own army in bringing up supplies to Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, his troops being meantime quartered in such a manner as to cover the lines of transit. In this way, the object of putting both the captured fortresses in a state of defence was at length with infinite difficulty accomplished, which never would have been done by the Spanish authorities, although this year, in addition to other assistance, they got a million sterling in specie from the British government.^{2*}

Great was the indignation of the French Emperor when he learned the disaster at Badajoz; which he felt the more keenly, as matters had now proceeded to such a point in the negotiations with Russia, that war in the north was plainly inevitable, and was openly prepared for by both the powers. It was entirely in consequence of his own absurd orders, that the fortress had been taken; for Marmont had clearly pointed out in good time, that Wellington was too well aware of the destitute condition of his army as to provisions, to be diverted from his project by an irruption into Beira; and that, unless both he and Soult succoured Badajoz, it would infallibly be taken.†

* "If the Spanish government insists upon my placing garrisons in the forts we have taken from the enemy, and I have made over to them, and do not take measures to place and support in them proper garrisons, I now give them notice I will destroy both Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz; for I cannot be tied by the leg to guard these fortresses against the consequence of their failure to garrison or provision them."—WELLINGTON to SIR H. WELLESLEY, 3d May 1812; GURW. ix. 111.

† "The Emperor's orders are so precise for me to assemble my army in Old Castile, that whatever my own opinion may be on the subject, I consider it my duty to conform to them; but I have done so without any hope of a good result. The Emperor appears to attach great weight to the effect which my demonstrations in the north will produce on the mind of Lord Wellington. I venture to entertain a contrary opinion, as I know that that general is well aware that we have no magazines, and appreciates the immense difficulties which the country

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41.

Wellington's efforts in his cantonments to supply the taken fortresses.

¹ Wellington to Sir H. Wellesley, April 28, 1812. Gurw. ix. 98.

² Nap. iv. 448, 449. Gur. ix. 98. Wellington to Sir H. Wellesley, May 3, 1812. Ibid. ix. 111.

42.

Napoleon's anger at the fall of Badajoz.

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¹ Belm. i.
217, 218.43.
Incorporation
of Catalonia
with the
French em-
pire.
Jan. 26.

Though he could thus with reason censure no one but himself for the disaster, Napoleon, however, according to his usual custom, laid the blame in every other quarter: upbraided Marmont bitterly for not having acted with more vigour on the side of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida; reproached Soult that he did nothing with eighty thousand of the best troops in the world; and announced his intention, upon his return from Poland, of assuming in person the direction of affairs in the Peninsula.¹*

Meanwhile, however, he deemed the time now arrived when he might begin to throw off the mask, and carry into execution his long-cherished project for the incorporation of the northern provinces of Spain with the French empire. Catalonia, accordingly, was declared an integral part of the French territory, and divided into four departments, each with its chief town, prefect, adjoint, and all the other appendages of the empire. Great undertakings were at the same time set on foot, to ensure the communication between the eastern Pyrenees and the banks of the Ebro. A new highway was opened from Mongat to Cabella, a distance of ten leagues, to avoid the fire of the English cruisers, which in that part of the old road commanded its course; another from Figueras

presents, from the impossibility of getting subsistence. Lord Wellington knows perfectly that the army of Portugal at this season is incapable of acting, and that if it advanced beyond the frontier it would be forced to return after a few days, after having lost all its horses. He will never be disquieted by apprehensions of a siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, as he knows we have no heavy artillery. The Emperor has ordered great works at Salamanca; he appears to forget that we have neither provisions to feed the workmen nor money to pay them, and that we are in every service on the verge of starvation."—MARMONT to BERTHIER, 2d March 1812, No. 94; BELMAS, i. Appendix.

* "Instead of studying and seeking to catch the spirit of the Emperor's instructions, you seem to have taken a pleasure in not understanding them, and to have directly carried out the reverse of their intentions. The Emperor earnestly recommends you to do your utmost to prevent forty thousand English from ruining the affairs of Spain, which will infallibly happen if the commanders of the different corps are not animated by that zeal for the public service, and pure patriotism, which can alone vanquish every obstacle, and prevent any sacrifice of the public interest to individual humour. On his return from Poland, the Emperor will himself take the command in Spain."—BERTHIER to MARMONT, 16th April 1812; BELMAS, No. 95, App. vol. i.

"The Emperor asks himself, Duke, how is it possible that six thousand English, and four or five thousand Portuguese, have carried off the magazines of Merida, advanced to the confines of Andalusia, and remained there a month in presence of your army, composed of eighty thousand of the best troops in the world, and able to assemble sixty thousand present under arms, with a cavalry so superior in numbers? Form instantly a corps of twenty thousand men of your best troops, and enter the Alentejo. This order is imperative. The Emperor is distressed that so noble an army has yet achieved nothing against the English."—BERTHIER to SOULT, 19th February 1812; BELMAS, i. App. No. 92, p. 625.

to Olot, to avoid the defiles of Castelfolet, so celebrated in the wars of the Succession ; two others were opened from Palamos on the coast to Gerona ; and a third commenced from that last fortress to Figueras by Pals, across the often flooded plains which lay between the great canal and the Ter. New fortified posts were every where established, and several points strongly barricaded ; in particular, the convent of the Capucines at Matara. Thus every thing conspired to indicate that Napoleon was resolutely bent on consolidating the annexation of Catalonia to the French empire ; and yet never was a step more injudicious in itself, or more likely to prove prejudicial to his own interests and that of his family in that country. It at once entailed a burdensome acquisition on France, the evils of defending which would probably exceed its advantages ; overstepped the durable barrier which nature has for ever established between the two kingdoms in the Pyrenees ; exasperated his brother, for the preservation of whose throne he had made such long-continued efforts, and alienated the affection even of his own partisans in the Peninsula, from a dynasty which thus commenced its career by inducing the partition of the monarchy.¹

Considerable reductions took place in the French troops in the Peninsula in May, in consequence of the necessity to which the Emperor was reduced of accumulating his whole disposable force to swell the enormous preparations for the Russian campaign. Dorsenne re-entered France with the Imperial Guard, ten thousand strong ; the division Palombini was drawn from Suchet in the kingdom of Valencia ; and the armies of the south, of the centre, and of Portugal, were weakened by twelve thousand veteran infantry, and two divisions of dragoons ; while six Polish regiments, under Chlopiki, took their course from the army of Aragon for the shores of the Vistula. The total amount of the troops thus withdrawn was little short of forty thousand men ; but the imperial muster-rolls still exhibited an army of two hundred and eighty thousand soldiers in Spain, of whom two hundred and thirty thousand were present with the eagles.* On the

¹ See Decree, Jan. 26, 1812. Belm. i. Nap. 97, App. and i. 225.

44.
Reduction in the French force in the Peninsula.

* See *Imperial Muster-Rolls*, 15th May 1812, Appendix A, Chap. lxviii.

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other hand, the British forces in Portugal at this period amounted to fifty-three thousand infantry, cavalry, and artillery, of whom seven thousand five hundred were horse ; and the Portuguese were about twenty-seven thousand—in all eighty thousand men.* But though the health of the troops materially improved in May, while they lay in cantonments on the Coa, yet such was the general sickness which prevailed, especially among the newly arrived regiments, at a subsequent period, that the whole force which Wellington could ever, during the campaign, collect under his standards, was fifty-seven thousand men. Of these twelve thousand were under the orders of Hill in Estremadura, and forty-five thousand under his own command on the Ciudad Rodrigo frontier. Thus, so immense were the resources of the French Emperor, that, notwithstanding all his drafts for the Russian war, his effective forces in the Peninsula were still four times as numerous as those of the English general ; and it must always be a matter of pride to the British historian, that both Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz had been taken, and the tide of imperial fortune turned into ebb, before any drafts had been made from the French armies in Spain, and when Wellington was still confronted by the immense force with which Napoleon had laid his iron grasp on the Peninsula.¹

The Anglo-Portuguese army, however, had now, from the experience of five successive campaigns, attained to an extraordinary degree of perfection ; and its central position and water-carriage in rear, in a great measure compensated its inferiority in numbers to the vast but scattered legions of Napoleon. It was no longer a body of brave and disciplined but inexperienced men, admirable for a single fight, but unacquainted with the varied duties, and sinking under the protracted fatigues of a campaign. Experience, the best of all instructors, had

¹ Nap. v.
618. Jones,
ii. 377. Ap-
pendix.
Belm. i. 227.

45.
Improved
character of
the British
army at this
period.

* The exact numbers of the British were, on 25th March 1812,

Infantry,	42,289
Cavalry,	7,558
Artillery,	3,322

Total, 53,169

The loss at Badajoz was more than compensated by reinforcements which arrived in May, before the troops took the field.—*Adjutant-General's Report*, Appendix, 18 ; JONES, vol. ii.

in a few years conferred ages of education. Necessity, the mother not less of acquisition than of invention, had made both soldiers and officers acquainted with their most important duties; suffering, the most effectual regulator of impetuous dispositions, had cooled down the undue vehemence of youthful aspiration into the regulated valour of tried subordination. The British army now set forth in its career, confident not merely of conquering the enemy in the field, but of prevailing over him in the campaign. The difficulties of sieges, the duties of retreat, the necessity of protracted evolutions, had become familiar to all. It was universally felt that war is a complicated as well as a difficult science, but that there were none of its contingencies with which the British soldiers were not familiar, and none of its duties to which the British generals were not adequate. For the first time in English history, a British army now took the field in numbers somewhat approaching to those of the continental powers, and with the experience of actual warfare superadded to the native courage of the Anglo-Saxon race, and the acquired energy of English freedom. And in the consequences of this combination—the campaigns of Salamanca, Vittoria, and Waterloo—is to be seen the clearest evidence of the incalculable effect it was fitted to have produced on human affairs, and decisive proof of the universal empire to which it must have led, if its freeborn energies, like those of Rome, had been exclusively directed to military conquest, and its mission from Providence, instead of being the spreading the blessings of religion and the light of knowledge through the wilderness of nature, had been that of subjugating the states of civilised man.¹

The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, like the wrenching out of two huge corner-stones, loosened the whole fabric of French power in Spain; nothing was wanting but a blow at its heart to make the whole edifice crumble into ruins. But whether to deliver that blow against Marmont in the north, or Jourdan in the centre, was the question. Wellington, judging like Napoleon that the vital point in Spain was the line of communication between Bayonne and Madrid, wisely chose the former;*

¹ Jones, ii.
90. Nap. v.
9, 10.

46.
Description
of the French
forts at the
bridge of
Almarez.

* *Ante*, Chap. lv. § 22.

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but, before commencing his operations, he resolved to strike a blow at the French fortifications recently erected at Almaraz, which commanded the important bridge of boats over the Tagus at that place, their shortest and best line of communication from the southern to the northern banks of the river. All the permanent bridges, from Toledo downwards, had been destroyed by one or other of the belligerents in the course of the war; and the roads leading from them, being almost all over mountain ridges, were scarcely practicable for carriages. Sensible of the importance of the only one remaining at Almaraz, Napoleon had some time before directed Marmont to construct strong works at both its extremities, capable of securing them alike against the Spanish guerillas and the British incursions; and the French marshal had, in pursuance of his instructions, constructed forts at that important point of a very solid description.¹ On the right bank, the bridge was protected by the *tête-du-pont*, Lugar Nuevo, a square fort with bastions, surrounded by a high wall, of four feet in thickness, loopholed, and enclosing a great depot of provisions. In front of that work, and to secure an eminence which commanded it on the left bank, was the Fort Napoleon, a semicircular redoubt constructed of earth, and commanded in the gorge by a square loopholed tower of solid masonry. At a still greater distance, about a league from the Tagus, the fort of Mirabete had been constructed in the gorges of the mountains, forming the southern barrier of the valley of the Tagus, and commanding the road to Truxillo, the only route in that quarter practicable for artillery. Finally, on the right bank of the Tagus was the Fort Ragusa, placed on an eminence a hundred yards from the river, so situated as to command the other fortifications at the bridge-head, and deprive the enemy of an advantageous point for attacking them. These works were armed with eighteen pieces of cannon, and garrisoned by a battalion and several companies of gunners; in all, about eleven hundred men.²

To destroy these formidable fortifications at this important passage, Hill was intrusted with a light column of six thousand men, including four hundred horse, and twelve light and six heavy guns. The operation, how-

¹ Berthier to Marmont, July 10, 1811. Belm. i. 580.

² Belm. i. 221, 222. Hill's Despatches, May 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 185. Nap. v. 11. Jones, ii. 93.

ever, which had been originally projected by Wellington previous to the attack on Badajoz, had now become one of extreme difficulty ; for not only was Drouet, with nine thousand men belonging to Soult's forces, lying at Hinojosa de Cordova, nearer to Merida than Hill was to Almaraz, but Foy's division of Marmont's army was at Talavera, in the valley of the Tagus ; and D'Armagnac with a considerable body from the army of the centre, was also in the neighbourhood of that river. Thus, when the English general advanced so far up the valley of the Tagus as Almaraz, he was in a manner surrounded by enemies ; for two divisions, each stronger than his own, lay at no great distance in his front ; and another, by a rapid march, might from the south intercept his retreat. To provide against these dangers, Graham, with two divisions and Cotton's cavalry, was advanced to the neighbourhood of Portalegre, so as to be in a situation to advance to Hill's support if required. But still Drouet, by a rapid march, might interpose between him and Hill, and beat them in detail ; and the French in the upper part of the valley of the Tagus, might suddenly fall with superior forces upon the troops so far pushed on as the bridge of Almaraz, and destroy them before any succour arrived. Thus the utmost celerity and secrecy were essential to the success of the enterprise.¹

The better to deceive the enemy as to the real point of attack, rumours were spread that the invasion of Andalusia was in contemplation, and the militia of the Alentejo were moved towards Niebla, to give the greater appearance of probability to the account ; while the bridge at Merida, which had been broken down during the operations against Badajoz, was restored with the professed intention of transporting Hill's battering and pontoon train, which had been formed at Elvas, to the same destination. These precautions so completely imposed upon the enemy, that, although the bridge at Merida required a fortnight for its repair, and Hill, in consequence, could not break up from his cantonments at Almendralejo till the 12th, no suspicion existed on the part of the French generals as to the quarter where the blow was to be struck. On the morning of the 16th the troops reached Jaraicejo, and

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47.

Hill's preparations for the attack.

¹ Nap. v. 13.
Jones, ii. 93.
Belm. i. 222.

48.

Hill's attack on Almaraz.

May 16.

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May 18.

two days afterwards arrived at the mountain range which separates the valley of the Tagus from that of the Guadiana, and in the highest part of the gorge in which the castle of Mirabete was placed. By drawing a range of field-works from this fort across the pass to a fortified house on the other side of the main road, the French had completely blocked up the only route practicable for artillery from the Guadiana to Almaraz. After reconnoitring the works in the pass, Hill, finding that the delay which had occurred in the march of his troops had rendered a surprise impossible, judged it most advisable not to attempt to force a passage; but, leaving his artillery at the summit of the sierra, at dark began to descend a rugged road, passable only for infantry, by the village of Romangorda, towards Almaraz; and, by taking every imaginable precaution against discovery, reached the close vicinity of Fort Napoleon, unobserved by the enemy, before daybreak on the following morning.¹

¹ Hill's Despatches, May 20, 1812. Gurw. ix. 186. Nap. v. 16, 17. Jones, ii. 93.

49.
Storming of the forts. May 19.

Though the head of the column under General Howard got to the point of attack in such good time, yet such were the difficulties of a march six miles long through the mountains, that a considerable time elapsed before the rear was sufficiently closed up to permit an attack. Fortunately, during this anxious interval, the troops were concealed by a deep intervening ravine and some small hills from the enemy's observation; and the French soldiers on Fort Napoleon were crowding the ramparts, listening to the sound of cannon which now came rolling down from Fort Mirabete, and observing the volumes of smoke which mingled with the clouds on the summit of the sierra, when a loud shout broke on their ears, and the rush of British bayonets was upon them. Though surprised at the suddenness of the attack, they were not unprepared, as they had received intelligence of Hill's being in the vicinity, and the garrison of Fort Napoleon had in consequence been strongly reinforced by some troops in the neighbourhood. A crashing volley of grape and musketry at once struck the head of the British column; but the men rushed on, headed by the gallant Howard, in the most undaunted manner, and applying the scaling ladders to the scarp, commenced the escalade. The ladders were much too short for the whole height.

but they enabled them to reach an intermediate ledge or *berm*, as it is technically called ; and having got up, the assailants found it so broad that the ladders were a second time applied from it as a base, and the summit was reached. Instantly a loud cheer announced the success of the enterprise ; the soldiers from behind came rushing over : victors and vanquished, pell-mell, swept on to the central tower, which was carried in the first tumult of success. The garrison, upon this, fled in dismay to the bridge, closely followed by the pursuers, who, in the general confusion, got through the *tête-du-pont* ; while the governor of Fort Ragusa, on the opposite side, seized with a sudden panic, not only cut the bridge before half his own men had got over, but hastily, and before he was attacked, abandoned his own fort, and retreated to Talavera. Thus the whole works on both sides of the river, with all their artillery and immense stores, fell into the hands of the British, who also made two hundred and fifty prisoners, among whom was the governor of Fort Napoleon, with the loss only of a hundred and eighty men.¹

Having effected this brilliant exploit, Hill immediately destroyed all the forts, burned the bridge and stores, and on the same day retraced his steps to Fort Mirabete in the mountains, which, entirely isolated and environed by enemies, might now be expected to fall an easy prey. In effect, operations, with every prospect of success, were commencing next day against this stronghold, against which the heavy guns had already been brought up, when an incorrect report, transmitted by Sir William Erskine, as to Soult with a formidable force being already in Estremadura, obliged Hill, much against his will, to abandon this second prize when just about to fall into his hands, and retire to Merida, which he reached on the 26th, after having suffered no molestation from the enemy. Foy meanwhile hastened from Talavera to Almaraz with his division ; but he arrived only in time to witness the expiring flames of the conflagration which had consumed the bridge and works ; and Hill quietly resumed his old quarters in the neighbourhood of Badajoz. Wellington, however, who was aware that Erskine's false alarm was occasioned entirely by an exaggerated and confused account of Drouet's movements, and that Soult was too

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¹ Hill's Report, Gurw. ix. 186. Nap. v. 19, 20. Jones, ii. 93, 94. Belm. I. 221, 222. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 35, 36.

50.
Mirabete is saved by a false alarm, and Hill retires to Badajoz.

May 26.

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far distant to be capable of doing mischief, was justly dissatisfied at this unlucky mistake, which rendered the success of the enterprise not so complete as it otherwise might have been ; and he expressed his complaints on the want of judgment in separate command on the part even of his bravest generals in his private despatches to government. But the truth is, that the evil was owing to a general cause, not imputable to any individual as a fault ; and it is part of the price which the nation pays for those free institutions, and that general intelligence to which its greatness has been owing. They bring the mass of the people, who are incapable of judging correctly on the subject, to pass an opinion on the actions of all public functionaries, and thus paralyse them, when left to their own responsibility, by the painful reflection, that difficulty will not be considered, nor failure forgiven, by those to whom, nevertheless, the final decision on all measures of importance is committed.¹

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
May 28, 1812.
Gurw. ix. 191.
Nap. v. 21.

51.
Defeat of
Ballasteros
in Andalusia.
June 1.

Ballasteros took advantage of the absence of Soult, during his march towards Estremadura, to attack with his whole force, six thousand strong, a French detachment stationed at Bornos, a central position between Cadiz and Seville, which covered the principal communications between these points. This attempt, however, proved most unfortunate ; and demonstrated how little reliance, notwithstanding all their experience and suffering, was to be placed on the Spanish troops. Conroux, who commanded the French, cautiously kept within his intrenched camp, as if fearful of a combat. This led the presumptuous Spaniards to imagine that he would fall an easy prey ; and they accordingly assaulted the intrenched camp in a very disorderly manner. The result might easily have been foreseen. So far from waiting for the enemy behind his field-works, Conroux sallied forth unexpectedly upon them as they first came within fire, and instantly put them to the rout with the loss of above fifteen hundred killed and wounded. The remainder, utterly disorganised, were driven for refuge to their old quarters in the camp of St Roque, under the cannon of Gibraltar. This disaster was the more sensibly felt by Wellington, that it enabled Soult,² now relieved from all disquietude about his rear, to reinforce Drouet in Estremadura with two divisions of

² Jones, ii.
95. Tor. v.
29, 30. Nap.
v. 61, 63.
Gurw. ix.
240. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
56, 57.

cavalry and one of infantry, which raised his force to twenty-one thousand men, of whom three thousand were superb horse, and this at a time when the imprudent daring of the English dragoons under Slade drew them, in an action with the French cavalry under Lallemand, into an ambuscade, where they were ultimately defeated with the loss of one hundred and fifty men.

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As matters had now assumed a serious aspect in Estremadura, and Wellington was anxious to be relieved from all anxiety in that quarter before undertaking his projected offensive movement in the northern provinces, he raised the force under Hill, who had assumed the command there in consequence of Sir Thomas Graham having been obliged by ill health to return to England, to the amount of twenty thousand British and Portuguese, and three thousand Spaniards, of whom two thousand five hundred were horse; and recommended him, if pressed, to fall back and give battle on the old field of Albuera. Drouet's force, though somewhat inferior in numerical amount, was fully equal in real efficiency, from the homogeneous quality of the troops of which it was composed; and every thing, therefore, seemed to prognosticate a second important battle to the south of Badajoz. Nevertheless it did not take place, and the early period of the campaign passed away without any event of note in that quarter. Drouet, whose instructions from Soult were discretionary, to fight or not as occasion might offer, was too strongly impressed with the recollection of the dreadful battle last year at Albuera, to venture upon a second action on equal terms on the same ground, and accordingly he did not advance beyond Almendralejo. On the other hand, Hill, whom the brilliant and daring exploits at Aroyo de Molinos and Almaraz had inspired with a well-founded confidence both in his own talents and the quality of his soldiers, had the rare patriotic spirit to obtain the mastery of the strongest motives of individual ambition, and risk nothing where he might fairly have anticipated immortal fame, lest he should interfere with the grand operations undertaken by Wellington in person on the banks of the Tormes.¹

52.
Defensive
measures in
Estremadura.

¹ Wellington
to Hill, June
6, 1812.
Gurw. ix. 218.
Nap. v. 63.

Wellington's preparations for this important movement had now nearly reached their maturity. With infinite

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53.

Wellington's
preparations
for the in-
vasion of
Spain.¹ Gurw. ix.
142, 143.² Jones, ii.
95, 96. Gurw.
ix. 227, 230.
Nap. iv. 372.54.
Soult's plans
at this period.

care he had established a powerful military police in his army, the officers of which were intrusted with the most extensive powers of summary chastisement, and which promised to produce, as in effect it did, that incomparable discipline and order in the field, by which, not less than its astonishing victories, this army was ever afterwards distinguished. A month's provision for the army was by the greatest efforts got together, and stored in Ciudad Rodrigo, even though the scarcity of money at headquarters at that period was such—owing to the vast preparations of France and Russia for the gigantic contest approaching in the north of Europe, as well as the long-continued drain of the Peninsular war—that specie was absolutely not to be had, and the English general had never, since the commencement of the contest, been reduced to such straits by its want.¹ Several hundred carts, which had been collected for the siege of Badajoz; were suddenly moved towards Ciudad Rodrigo from the neighbourhood of that fortress and the Caldao river, where they had been hitherto employed in the important work of victualling its garrison for two months, which had at length been accomplished; the heavy howitzers and some eighteen-pounders were secretly fitted on travelling carriages at Almeida; and by the genius of Colonel Sturgeon of the engineers, the broken arch in the noble Roman bridge of Alcantara, a hundred feet wide and nearly a hundred and thirty high, was restored by means of a suspension communication formed of cables, so strongly twisted together, and so firmly fastened at either end, that the heaviest guns passed over in safety. Thus a more direct line of intercourse across the Tagus was opened between the two British armies than that of which they had formerly made use at Villa Velho.²

So vast were the French forces still in the Peninsula, notwithstanding all the drafts for the Russian war, that Soult was not only secure in Andalusia, but at the very time when Wellington was preparing for a great irruption into the northern provinces of Spain, he was taking measures for an invasion of the southern ones of Portugal. His plans for this purpose had for nearly two years been in preparation; and with such prudence were they conceived, and so large was the force at his disposal for their

execution, that it was a mere question of time which general should move first; and which, by obtaining the initiative, should succeed in driving the other from the Peninsula. For the success of this design it was indispensable that his rear should be secured, save against an incursion from the Isle of Leon, in which quarter Victor's gigantic lines appeared a sufficient barrier; and with this view he had resolved to crush Ballasteros, reduce Tarifa, Alicante, and Carthagena; and, having thus pacified Andalusia, to intrust its defence to Victor and the Spanish troops, nearly twenty thousand strong, raised in the province; while he himself, with his whole disposable force, about forty thousand veteran troops, should carry the war into the Alentejo, and threaten Lisbon on its least protected side. The effect of this, he hoped, even in the least favourable view, would be to draw Wellington back to his old stronghold at Torres Vedras; Marmont could meanwhile operate against his retiring columns; and even if he were able to make head against both, still the result would be, that the credit of the French arms would be restored, new fields of plunder opened, and the war driven up into a corner of the Peninsula. The repulse at Tarifa, in the close of the preceding year, had delayed this project; but the rashness and consequent rout of Ballasteros at Bornos had again smoothed the way for its execution. He only waited for the reaping of the harvest, to collect provisions for the enterprise: and in the meanwhile, the better to conceal his real object, he began a serious bombardment of the long-beleaguered Isle of Leon; and huge mortars, constructed to carry three miles, from the advanced works of Trocadero, now for the first time carried the flames of war into the streets of Cadiz.¹

From intercepted returns which at this period fell into Wellington's hands, through the never-ceasing activity of the Spanish guerillas, the real force at the disposal of the French marshals was accurately ascertained, and it was still much more considerable than he had been led to imagine. Suchet had seventy-six thousand men still in Catalonia and Valencia, of whom sixty thousand were present with the eagles; forty-nine thousand, of whom thirty-eight thousand were effective, composed the army of the north in Biscay and Navarre, of which two divisions

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¹ Nap. v. 57,
58. Belm. i.
228. Soult's
Papers in
Nap. *ut*
supra.

55.
Forces of the
French in
Spain.

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were destined to reinforce Marmont ; nineteen thousand, nearly all effective, lay under Jourdan at Madrid, and might be reckoned on as a reserve to support any quarter which might be exposed to danger ; while, exposed to the brunt of the conflict, Soult, with sixty-three thousand, of whom fifty-six thousand were present with the eagles, occupied Andalusia and the southern parts of Estremadura ; and Marmont with seventy thousand, of whom fifty-two thousand were effective, guarded Leon, Old Castile, and the Asturias, in addition to twelve thousand who were on the march to join him from France. In all, three hundred thousand men, of whom two hundred and forty thousand were effective in the field, besides forty thousand Spaniards, who had been enrolled under the imperial banners and brought to a comparatively efficient state : a mighty array—strong in its numbers, its generals, its discipline, and its recollections ; but weakened by internal divisions, paralysed by the devastation of plunder, scattered for the necessity of subsistence. Into the midst of this host of enemies, Wellington was about to throw himself with sixty thousand effective men, of whom forty thousand were under his own immediate orders, and twenty thousand under those of Hill : but this force was confident of victory, skilfully led and amply supplied ; possessed of an internal line of communication, enjoying the confidence of the inhabitants, and strengthened by the justice with which its proceedings had been directed.¹

¹ Imperial
Muster Rolls
in Appendix,
No. I. Nap.
v. 100, 101.
Gurw. ix.
225, 238, 239.

56.
Advance of
Wellington
to Sala-
manca.

All things being in readiness, Wellington, on the 13th June, **CROSSED THE AGUEDA**, and commenced that campaign which has rendered his name and his country immortal. Four days afterwards he reached Salamanca, and passed the Tormes in four columns by the fords of Santa Martha and Los Cantos ; Marmont retiring as he advanced, after throwing garrisons into the forts of the town, and the castle of Alba de Tormes, which commanded an important passage over the river. Then was seen the profound hatred with which the Peninsular people were animated against their Gallic oppressors, and the vast amount of evil which they had received at their hands. Salamanca instantly became a scene of rejoicing ; the houses were illuminated, the people alternately singing and weeping for joy ; while the British army passed

triumphantly through the shouting crowd, and took a position on the hill of San Christoval, about three miles in advance of the town. It was no wonder such joy was evinced at their deliverance from a bondage which had now endured four years. Independent of innumerable acts of extortion and oppression during their stay, the French had destroyed thirteen out of twenty-five convents, and twenty-two out of twenty-five colleges, in that celebrated seat of learning, the stones of which were built up into three forts, which now, in a military point of view, constituted the strength of the place.¹

San Vincent, named from the large convent which it enclosed, and situated on a perpendicular cliff which overhung the Tormes, was the most important of these strongholds. The two other forts, called Cajetano and La Merced, were also placed on the loftiest of the steep eminences with which this romantic city abounds; and the whole three had bomb-proof buildings, deep ditches, perpendicular scarps and counterscarps, and other defences which could only be reduced by a regular siege. They were accordingly immediately invested, and on the second day after ground had been broken, the heavy guns began to batter in breach; and the artillery ammunition having become scanty from this unexpected resistance, an opening made in the pallisades, considerable injury done to the scarp, and a part of the wall of the convent within fallen, an attempt was made to carry the forts of Cajetano and La Merced by escalade. The attempt, however, though gallantly conducted by General Bowes,* failed, after one hundred and twenty men had fallen, from the entrance being still blocked up and impassable: and the operations were again unavoidably suspended from want of ammunition; while the aspect of affairs on the outside of the city seemed to prognosticate an immediate and decisive battle.²

Marmont collected his whole army on the Douro, between the 16th and 19th, with the exception of Bonnet's

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¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 18,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 241. Nap.
v. 122. Belm.
i. 229.

57.
Siege of the
forts.
June 17.

June 23.
² Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 25,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 255. Nap.
v. 128, 133.
Belm. i. 228,
229.

* This brave man was slightly wounded early in the attack, as he headed the troops, and removed to a little distance in the rear to have the wound dressed. The surgeon was in the act of doing so, when the cry arose that the troops were driven back: Bowes, hurt as he was, immediately hastened to the front to rally the men, led them back to the foot of the walls, and was there shot through the heart.—See WELLINGTON to LORD LIVERPOOL, 25th June 1812; GURWOOD, ix. 255.

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58.

Marmont's
ineffectual
attempt to
raise the
siege.

June 20.

June 23.

June 24.

i Gurw. ix.
242, and 254,
255. Jones,
ii. 97, 98.
Nap. v. 129,
131. Vict. et
Cong. xxi.
38, 39. Belm.
iv. 439, 447.

division, which was still in the Asturias, and moved forward with about thirty-six thousand men, of whom three thousand two hundred were cavalry, and seventy-two pieces of cannon. Wellington had taken every imaginable precaution, by directing the Conde d'Amarante to move out of the north of Portugal, Castanos with the army of Galicia to attack Astorga, and all the guerilla chiefs in the north of Spain to harass the enemy's rear, to prevent such an accumulation of force against him. But the French gave themselves very little concern about these desultory efforts, and directed almost their whole force against the English army. Upon the approach of so formidable a body, concentrated in their position on the heights of San Christoval, a great battle was expected in both armies for the following day. The crisis, however, passed over without any event of importance. Marmont, after lying two days close to the British line, deemed them too strongly posted to admit of successful attack, and decamping on the 23d, made a show of crossing the Tormes and threatening the British line of communication, in the hope that they would in consequence draw back in that quarter, and an opportunity might occur of carrying off the beleaguered garrisons. In this hope, however, he was disappointed; for Wellington stood firm, merely passing a brigade of Bock's German horse across the river to watch his movements. Next day Marmont sent twelve thousand men across the Tormes, and seemed disposed to follow with his whole force: but Bock's steady dragoons retired slowly and in admirable order before them, and two divisions were immediately sent across to restore the balance on the other side; upon discovering which the enemy desisted from their attempt, repassed the Tormes by the fords of Huerta, and resumed their former position in front of San Christoval.^{1*}

While these movements were going forward in the rear of the besiegers, a fresh supply of ammunition was

* The faculty of rapidly withdrawing the mind from one subject and fixing it on another of a different description, is one of the surest marks of the highest class of intellectual powers. Of this a remarkable instance occurred at this period: for Wellington, on the day when he lay at San Christoval, in front of the French army, hourly expecting a battle, wrote out in the field a long and minute memorial on the establishment of a bank at Lisbon on the principles of the English ones.—See WELLINGTON to SIR CHARLES STUART, 25th June 1812; GURWOOD, ix. 249.

received in the trenches, and the fire of the breaching batteries was renewed in a much more effective manner. On the evening of the 26th, red-hot shot, which had been prepared in the town, were thrown into the forts, which speedily set them on fire; and though the garrisons at first, with great activity, extinguished the flames, yet the bombardment having been continued with much vigour all night, next morning the convent of San Vincent was in a blaze, and the breach of Cajetano so much widened that it was plainly practicable, and the storming party was formed. The white flag was then hoisted from Cajetano, and a parley ensued; but Wellington, deeming this only an artifice to gain time, allowed them only five minutes to make an unconditional surrender, and that period having elapsed without submission being made, the troops were ordered to advance to the assault. Very little resistance, however, was made: the conflagration in San Vincent paralysed the garrisons, and the troops got in at breaches more formidable than those of Ciudad Rodrigo with trifling loss. Seven hundred men were made prisoners; thirty pieces of cannon, and large stores in arms, ammunition, and clothing, fell into the hands of the victors, who, since the commencement of the siege, had sustained in the field and in the trenches a loss of five hundred men.¹

On learning the fall of the forts, Marmont retired, withdrawing the garrison from Alba de Tormes; the works of which, as well as those of the Salamanca strongholds, were immediately blown up by the British general. It then appeared evident that Wellington had been in error, in not having attacked his adversary when he lay before him at San Christoval; for he now retreated to the Douro, in order to await the reinforcements from Bonnet in the Asturias and Caffarelli in Biscay, which were on their march to join him; and Joseph, with the army of the centre, was also in motion, to fall on the right flank of the invader; so that an overwhelming force might soon be expected to accumulate around the latter, and compel his retreat. Aware of the succours which were approaching, Marmont withdrew behind the Douro, and strongly occupied the fortified bridges of Zamora, Toro, and Tor-desillas, which defended the principal passages of that

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59.

Capture of
the forts.
June 27.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Liverpool,
June 30,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 261, 262.
Nap. v. 133,
134. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
39. Behn. iv
449, 451.

60.

Marmont re-
tires behind
the Douro.

July 2.

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July 7.

river. Wellington followed, and reached the southern bank, where preparations were immediately commenced for forcing the passage, and the army waited quietly till the waters, which were subsiding, should have fallen sufficiently to render the fords practicable. The position of the French here, however, guarded by a hundred pieces of cannon, was so exceedingly strong, that but little expectation could be entertained of forcing it in front; but Wellington had been led to form sanguine hopes that, being entirely destitute of magazines or stores of any kind, so large a body of men would soon consume the whole subsistence in their vicinity, and be compelled either to fall back to less wasted districts, or detach so largely in quest of food, as might furnish an opportunity for striking a blow at their centre. In this hope, however, he was disappointed: the skill which long experience had given the French in extorting supplies out of a country, again on this, as on many previous occasions, exceeded what was conceived possible; and, on the 7th, Marmont was joined by Bonnet's division from the Asturias, which augmented his force to forty-five thousand men.^{1*}

¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, July 7, 1812. Gurw. ix. 275. Jones, ii. 100, 101. Marmont to Berthier, July 1, 1812. Belm. i. 653.

61.

Able movements of Marmont, and Wellington's retreat.

July 15.

It was now Wellington's turn to feel anxious; for not only was the army in his front superior to his own, but Caffarelli, with ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, was rapidly approaching, and his own supplies were brought up with great difficulty, by a long line of communication, from the Agueda, which would ere long be threatened by the army of the centre, now fast coming up from Madrid. It soon appeared that the French general, confident in his received and expected reinforcements, was about to assume the offensive; and his measures with this view were taken with great ability. He first moved a considerable body of men towards his own right, as if with the design of crossing the Douro at Toro; this of course induced a parallel movement of Wel-

* "The army of Portugal has now been surrounded for the last six weeks, and scarcely a letter reaches its commander: but the system of organised rapine and plunder, and the extraordinary discipline so long maintained in the French armies, enable it to subsist at the expense of the total ruin of the country in which it has been placed; and I am not certain that Marshal Marmont has not now at his command a greater quantity of provisions and supplies of every sort than we have."—WELLINGTON TO LORD BATHURST, 21st July 1812; GURWOOD, ii. 298.

lington to his left: then, in order still farther to impose upon the enemy, two French divisions actually passed over at that place, and made a show of turning the British left. In the night, however, this movement was suddenly reversed: Marmont countermarched with all his forces; those which had crossed at Toro were quickly withdrawn, and moved up the right bank of the river; and such was the expedition used that by morning they were at Tordesillas, twenty-five miles above the former town! Immediately the river was passed at the latter point, the troops moved on with extraordinary celerity to Nava del Rey, on the left bank; and before nightfall the whole French army was concentrated in that neighbourhood, some of their divisions having marched forty and even forty-five miles, without a longer halt than for a few hours.¹

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July 16.

July 17.

¹ Belm. i.
131. Jones,
ii. 101, 102.
Nap. v. 136,
149.

This able manœuvre of Marmont's reduced Wellington to great difficulties. It re-established the communication between the army of Portugal and that under Joseph, which was rapidly approaching from the Guadarama pass, and which, with Caffarelli's reserves, would ere long raise the numerical amount under the French general to nearly seventy thousand men, with a hundred and forty guns. In addition to this, the diversions on which the English general had calculated to lighten the load likely to fall on him when he advanced into the centre of Spain, had, from one cause or other, proved entirely illusory. The Spaniards had been besieging Astorga, with twelve thousand men, for above a month; but although the breach was practicable, their ammunition failing, and the garrison only eleven hundred strong, nothing could persuade them to hazard an assault. Mina had just received a severe defeat, which had seriously paralysed the guerillas in the whole northern provinces; and the accounts from Cadiz were most discouraging. Soult's bombardment had at last struck a great panic into the citizens of that luxurious city, which had hitherto felt only the excitement and suffered none of the horrors of war; the British mediation in the affair of the revolted colonies had failed, under circumstances which left no room to doubt that their influence with the Cortes was on the wane;² and it was already suspected, what has since been

62.

Wellington's
difficulties
from the slowness
of the
Spaniards.

July 4.

² Nap. v.
143, 146.
Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 14,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 284, 289.
Belm. i. 231.

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ascertained by authentic evidence, that many members of that body had opened secret negotiations with Joseph ; and that, if he would recognise the democratic constitution, they were prepared to acknowledge his authority, and admit the French troops within the walls of Cadiz.

63.
Failure of
Lord W.
Bentinck in
his projected
co-operation.

But, disquieting as these accounts were, they were neither the only nor the greatest of Wellington's mortifications at this critical juncture. It had been arranged with him, and directed by government, that Lord William Bentinck, who commanded in Sicily, should, at the same time that he himself invaded Spain from the westward, menace it from the east, where Alicante and Carthagena still offered a secure basis for offensive operations. Wellington had relied much on the effect of this diversion ; and although, if earlier undertaken, it might have been attended with still greater results, by repulsing the storm of Tarragona, and preventing the siege of Valencia, yet still, at the eleventh hour, it promised, if ably conducted, to be followed by the most important consequences. He anticipated from it the recovery of one, perhaps both of these fortresses ; and expected that Joseph and the army of the centre, distracted by the pressing necessity of succouring Suchet and the eastern provinces, would be unable to detach in any considerable degree to the army of Portugal, or interfere with his operations in Leon and Castile. It may readily be conceived, therefore, what was the disappointment of the English general, when he received intelligence, as he lay fronting Marmont on the Douro, that Lord William Bentinck, instead of following out the concerted and directed plan of operations on the east of Spain, had been seduced into a hazardous and eccentric expedition to the coast of Italy, where no effective co-operation could be expected from the unwarlike inhabitants, and immediate success, even if attained, could terminate only in ultimate disaster. Owing to this unhappy change, the whole army of the centre was disposable against him.

1 Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 14,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 287, 289,
and 290.

And greater still was the immediate embarrassment produced by discovering that, at the very time when he was beyond all example straitened for money, in consequence of the unparalleled absorption of specie in the Russian expedition, and consequent impossibility of purchasing it, save at an enormous premium, in the south of Europe, no

less than four millions of dollars, which his agents might otherwise have got at Gibraltar and Minorca, had been swept away by those of Lord William for the charges of this tempting but Quixotic enterprise.*

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1812.

These considerations, and above all the near approach of the army of the centre with fourteen thousand men, made Wellington feel the necessity of a retreat. In the commencement of this retrograde movement, however, the British right wing was exposed to considerable danger, from which it was only saved by the admirable firmness of the troops engaged. Marmont brought the greater part of his forces to bear on the fourth and light divisions, under Sir Stapleton Cotton, which were then posted on the Trabancos, and which, during the night of the 17th, were, from the vast accumulation of the enemy in their front, in great danger. At daybreak on the 18th, the French troops commenced the attack; but Cotton with his two divisions contrived to maintain his position till the cavalry of Bock, Le Marchant, and Alten, which Wellington immediately brought up in person, came to their support. The whole then retired in admirable order through Castrejon, and towards the Guarena, till they effected their junction with the main body of the army, which was now concentrated on that stream.¹

61.
Wellington
retreats
across the
Guarena.

June 18.

¹ Gurw. ix.
295, 296.
Viet. et Conq.
xxi. 41. Nap.
v. 151.

The spectacle which ensued during this retreat was one

* "I have a letter from Lord W. Bentinck of the 9th June. He had sent the first division of the expedition to Minorca, and the second was about to go to Sardinia; but neither of them for the operations concerted on the eastern coast of the Peninsula. He has determined in lieu thereof to try his fortune in Italy, with fifteen thousand instead of six thousand, which he was to send into Spain. I hope he will succeed, but I doubt it: there is no solid foundation for his plan; he has not even fixed the degrees of latitude for his operations, much less the place of his landing."—WELLINGTON to GENERAL CLINTON, 16th July 1812; GURWOOD, ix. 293.

"Lord William's decision is fatal to the campaign, at least at present. If he should land any where in Italy, he will as usual be obliged to re-embark; and we shall have lost a golden opportunity here."—WELLINGTON to SIR H. WELLESLEY, 15th July 1812; *Ibid.* ix. 287.

"War cannot be carried on without money: we are to find money as we can, at the most economical rate of exchange; and then comes Lord William to Gibraltar, and carries off four millions of dollars, giving a shilling for each more than we can give; and after all he sends his troops upon some scheme to the coast of Italy, and not to the eastern coast of the Peninsula, as ordered by government and arranged with me."—WELLINGTON to SIR CHARLES STUART, 15th July 1812; *Ibid.* 289.

Lord W. Bentinck was a most amiable man, and possessed many valuable qualities; but they were suited rather to pacific administration than warlike combinations, as his subsequent government in India evinced; and he was strongly tinged with those speculative views in regard to the regeneration of society then so prevalent, and which have since so generally terminated in disappointment both in the Old and New World.

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65.
Beautiful
spectacle
which oc-
curred during
the retreat.

of the most beautiful which ever occurred in modern war. The air was sultry; the country open like the Downs in England; the troops, arrayed on either side in dense masses, marched close together, so near, indeed, that the officers in courtesy lowered their swords or touched their caps to each other; while the intervening space, hardly half musket-shot across, was filled with the German cavalry, who seemed stationed there to prevent a collision of the infantry till the proper season arrived. Forty French guns were collected on the high grounds on the French side of the river; and it was under the fire from these that Cotton's two divisions crossed the stream, after the two hostile bodies had marched for ten miles in this extraordinary state of close proximity. Nevertheless, such was the thirst of the men from the excessive heat, that the fourth division stopped for a few moments, in the midst of the cannonade, as they forded the water, to drink. The light division, whom long practice had rendered expert in all the arts of war, sipped the cool wave in their hands without halting.¹

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 21,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 295, 296.
Jones, ii. 102.
103. Nap. v.
151, 153.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 41, 42.

66.

Repulse of a
cavalry
attack at
Castrillo.

Emboldened by this retreat, Marmont now moved the cavalry of his right wing, under Carrier, across the Guarena at Castrillo, and began to push a column forward in order to gain possession of an important ridge which lay above that town, at the junction of the Guarena with the little stream of the Canizal. Wellington, however, had expected this movement; and just as the French horsemen were entering the valley, they were met by Alten's dragoons, and stopped by the successive charges of these gallant cavaliers. More cavalry, however, advanced to the support of the French, upon which Wellington ordered the 27th and 40th regiments, under Colonel Stubbs, to attack the flank of their foot, while the 3d dragoons came up to their support. These movements were entirely successful. The infantry came down the hill with an impetuous charge of the bayonet on the enemy's foot; and Alten's men being thus relieved, turned fiercely on their horse, who speedily gave way, and were driven back with the loss of one cannon, two hundred and forty prisoners, among whom was General Carrier himself, and three hundred killed and wounded.² The troops on both sides were highly excited by this action and their close proximity to each other, and

² Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 26,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 296, 297.
Nap. v. 154,
155. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
41, 42.

a general battle was universally and eagerly expected; but the day passed over without any further event. Neither general was prepared for the combat. Marmont's men were worn out with two days and a half of incessant and rapid marching; and Wellington felt too strongly the great superiority of the enemy's artillery, which was nearly double his own, to choose to hazard a battle, unless an occasion should offer of giving it with advantage.

The fatigues of both armies, and the extraordinary heat of the weather, which now glowed with all the ardour of the dog-days, prevented either host from moving on the following day till four in the afternoon, when Marmont took the initiative, and drawing back his right, advanced his left, and moved his whole force up the course of the Guarena, which there runs nearly due north, along the ridge of high downs which form the right bank of that stream. The English general moved in a parallel line along the heights on the left bank, and crossing the upper Guarena at Vallesa and El Olmo, took post for the night on the high table-land of Vallesa, where every preparation was made for a battle on the succeeding day. Marmont, however, instead of fighting there, continued his movement on the succeeding morning by his left; and, passing the English position, crossed the Guarena near Canta la Piedra, and pressing rapidly forward, soon gained the immense plateau which stretches thence to the neighbourhood of SALAMANCA. Wellington followed in a parallel line on a corresponding ridge of heights on his side of the river, and the imposing spectacle of the 18th was again repeated, but on a much grander scale; for the whole of both armies were now massed together, and they marched on parallel heights within musket-shot of each other, and in the most perfect array. The horse-artillery and cavalry on either side hovered round the moving hosts, ready to take advantage of the slightest disorder that might ensue, or dash into the first chasm that appeared. Not a rank was broken, however, nor an opening left in either of these noble armies. As one man, five-and-forty thousand upon either side moved on, while not a straggler or a carriage was left behind them on their track; and but for a few cannon-shot which occasionally interrupted the impressive stillness of the scene,

67.
Movements
on both sides
during the
retreat to
San Chris-
toval.
July 19.

July 20.

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1812.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 21,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 297. Vict.
et Conq. xxi.
42, 43. Nap.
v. 158, 159.
Jones, ii.
103, 104.

it might have been supposed that they were allied troops executing evolutions on a magnificent scale on a chosen field-day. Towards evening, however, it became manifest that the British were outflanked, and that they could not overtake the enemy so as to prevent their junction with the army of the centre; and Wellington therefore abandoned the parallel march, and falling back towards Salamanca, encamped for the night on the heights of Caboza Velloso; while the sixth division and Alten's cavalry, by a forced march, reached and secured the important position of San Christoval in front of that city.¹

68.
The British
retreat to the
neighbour-
hood of Sala-
manca.

The manœuvres of these interesting days had turned entirely to the advantage of the French marshal. Not only had he succeeded in assuming the initiative and taking the lead in operation, a matter always of the highest importance in war, but he had outflanked his opponent, and, by his indefatigable activity, changed his position from his front to his right flank, and interposed between the English army and the great road to Madrid. Nothing now could prevent Marmont from effecting his junction with the army of the centre, which was within a few days' march; and the English general, greatly outnumbered, would then have no alternative but a retreat to the Portuguese frontier. Severely mortified at this untoward result, but still resolved not to hazard the fate of the war on an action, unless its chances appeared to be favourable, Wellington on the 21st drew back his whole army to its old ground on the heights of San Christoval; while Marmont followed with his forces, and extended his left wing across the Tormes, so as to seize the road from Salamanca to Ciudad Rodrigo, and threaten the British communications. To counteract this, Wellington made a corresponding flank movement by the bridge and fords of Salamanca, and halted for the night on the heights near the left bank, still covering the city, and re-establishing his communications with Ciudad Rodrigo; and on the following morning the army was drawn out in position on that ground, extending from two bold rocky heights, called the Arapeiles, to the Tormes, below the fords of Santa Martha.²

July 22.
² Jones, ii.
104, 105.
Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 24,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 301. Nap.
v. 160, 161.

The situation of the British general was now very

critical; for not only was the army of the centre, fourteen thousand strong, rapidly approaching, but intelligence arrived in the night that Clausel, with the cavalry and artillery of the army of the north, had arrived so close in the rear of the French, that that additional force also would reinforce Marmont on the following day. Nothing could prevent the junction of these formidable additions with the French army; and it was obviously, therefore, the policy of its general to remain on the defensive, and shun a general engagement till they had arrived. But in this decisive moment the star of England prevailed. Marmont was aware that he would be superseded in his command by the arrival of Joseph or of Jourdan, the senior marshal in Spain: the retreat of Wellington, and his declining to attack when formerly in position at San Christoval, had inspired the French general with a mistaken idea of his character; and he now openly aspired to the glory, before his reinforcements came up, of forcing the English army to evacuate Salamanca, or possibly gaining a decisive victory, and snatching from the brows of its general the laurels of Busaco and Torres Vedras. Influenced by these feelings, the French marshal displayed an extraordinary degree of activity at this crisis. Observing that the two rocky heights of the Arapeiles were unoccupied on the British right, he pushed at noon a body of infantry out of the wood, where the principal part of his army was concealed, who stole unperceived round the more distant of them, and gained possession of it. This success rendered Wellington's position very critical; for Marmont immediately crowned the height he had won with heavy artillery, which commanded the only line by which the British army could have retreated in case of disaster: while the French, encouraged by the result of their first attempt, made a dash at the second height; but here they were anticipated by the British, who gained the hill and kept it.¹

The acquisition of the more distant Arapeiles by the enemy, rendered necessary a change of position on Wellington's part. The first and light divisions, accordingly, were brought up to front the enemy's troops on the right, and the whole army changed its front; what was lately the right became the left, while the new right was pushed

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69.

Critical situa-
tion of the
English army.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 23,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 302, 303.
Nap. v. 162,
162. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
44.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

70.

Movements
of both
armies im-
mediately
before the
battle.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 23,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 302. Nap.
v. 164, 166.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 44, 45.
Belm. i. 232,
233.

71.

False move-
ment of the
French left.

² Gurw. ix.
303. Nap. v.
166, 167.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 46.
Belm. i. 231.
Jackson's
Life of Wel-
lington, ii.
221.

as far as Aldea Tejada, on the Ciudad Rodrigo road. The commissariat and baggage waggons also were ordered to the rear, and the dust of their trains was already visible to both armies on the highway to that fortress. This circumstance, joined to the British troops being only here and there visible, where the hollows of the ground opened a vista of part of their array, led Marmont to suppose that a general retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo was in preparation : and in fact he was not far wrong in his guess ; for there can be no doubt that in that, or at latest the following night, this retrograde movement would have been undertaken. Fearing that they would get out of reach before his forces were fully concentrated, at two o'clock in the afternoon he took his resolution. Thomière's division, covered by fifty guns, which commenced a furious cannonade on the British columns within their reach, was pushed to the extreme left, to menace the Ciudad Rodrigo road : he was followed by Brennier and Maucunne ; while the march of all the French divisions towards the centre was hastened, in order, with the remainder of the army, comprising four divisions, to fall on the flank of the British as they defiled past the French Arapeiles.¹

Thomière's division, which headed the hostile array, reached the Peak of Miranda, while a French regiment won the village of Arapeiles, by which it was intended the main body of their army should fall perpendicularly on the British ; but they were speedily driven from the greater part of it again, and a fierce struggle was going forward. Meanwhile, Thomière's division, followed by Brennier's, exactly like that of the Russian centre in performing a similar flank movement in presence of the enemy at Austerlitz,* advanced too rapidly, and a chasm, at first small but rapidly increasing, appeared between their divisions and that of Maucunne, which succeeded them and formed the nearest part of the centre. Wellington had descended from the English Arapeiles when intelligence of this false movement was brought him : instantly he returned to the height, and with a glass surveyed, shortly but with close attention, their left wing, now entirely separated from the centre.² Immediately his resolution was taken : " At last I have them ! " was

* *Ante*, Chap. xli. § 129.

his emphatic exclamation, as he took the glass from his eye: orders were sent out to the commanders of divisions with extraordinary celerity; and turning to the Spanish general Alava, who stood by his side, he caught him by the arm and said, "Mon cher Alava, Marmont est perdu!"

So rapid were the movements, so instantaneous the onset of the British, that it seemed as if the spirit of a mighty wizard had suddenly transfused itself into the whole host. Independent of the imprudent extension of their left, Wellington had the advantage of his opponents in another particular; for his line formed the chord, while they were toiling round the arc, and consequently his dispositions were made with much greater celerity, and his troops in a much more concentrated position than theirs could be. Instant use was made of this advantage. The first and light divisions, under Generals Campbell and Alten, and forming the left of the army, were placed in reserve behind the Arapeiles hill; the fifth division, under General Leith, was moved from the centre to the right, which now consisted of that division, the third and the fourth, under Pakenham and Cole; the sixth and seventh, under Clinton and Hope, were in reserve immediately behind them; the third division, under Pakenham, supported by D'Urban's cavalry, formed the extreme right of the army; while the first and light divisions, and Pack's Portuguese, all on the highest ground, were disposed in broad masses as a reserve. When this disposition was completed, the army formed a line in *échelon*, with the right in front. The attack was to be made first in that quarter; the onset was to fall on the French disunited, scattered, and partly in march; and Wellington, like Frederick at Leuthen and Rosbach, and Napoleon at Austerlitz,* was to give another example of the wonderful effects of the oblique mode of attack, when applied by a skilful general, and falling on an unwary adversary.¹

Marmont's object in the early part of the day had been

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

72.

Wellington's
dispositions
of attack.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 23,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 303. Nap.
v. 167, 168.
Jones, ii. 106.
Jom. iv. 234.

* "Imitating the example of Frederick at Rosbach, or rather my own at Austerlitz, he allowed the separation of our left to be decidedly pronounced, and then commenced the attack on the height of the Arapeiles by Beresford, and by an oblique march threw the weight of his force on the extreme left, which threatened to turn him."—JOMINI, *Vie de Napoleon*, iv. 23.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

73.

French dis-
positions, and
commence-
ment of the
battle.

to assume a good defensive position; but at two in the afternoon this design was exchanged for that of a vigorous offensive if a favourable opportunity should occur; and it was in order to facilitate this object that Thomière's division had been sent to occupy the high ground on the extreme left, which has already been mentioned. No sooner did he observe the concentration of troops on the British right, than he ordered Maucunne and Brennier, with their respective divisions, to move to his support, and they were in the act of doing so when the tempest fell upon them. Thus, when the British line, in close order and admirable array, assailed the French, Thomière's division on their extreme left was two leagues from their centre, and Maucunne and Brennier imperfectly filled up the gap, being themselves separated by a distinct interval both from the one and the other. In vain Marmont, who from the summit of the French Arapeiles discovered the danger, strove to guard against it, and despatched orders to his left to close in again to the centre, and to the centre divisions to hasten to the left: before his orders could reach those distant columns, the British bayonets were upon them.¹

¹ Marmont
to Joseph,
July 25,
1812. *Belm.*
i. 664. *Pièces*
Just. Vict. et
Cong. xxi.
47, 48.

74.

Progress of
the battle,
and wound of
Marmont.

The dark mass of troops which occupied the English Arapeiles, "rushing," as an eyewitness relates, "violently down the interior slope of the mountain, entered the valley between them and the enemy amidst a storm of bullets which seemed to shear away the very surface of the earth over which the soldiers moved." Tranquil on the summit of the French Arapeiles, Marmont trusted that this terrible tempest would arrest the attack of the British infantry; nor was he disquieted even by their gallant advance in the midst of it, till he beheld Pakenham's division and D'Urban's cavalry move at right angles directly across Thomière's line of march, at the foot of the Peak of Miranda, while other broad masses of crimson uniforms were marching against him in front. Aware at once of the danger, he hurried in person towards the spot, when the accidental explosion of a shell from a distant British battery stretched him on the plain, with a broken arm and severe wound in the side.² His fall, however, probably made little difference on the issue of

² *Belm. i.*
232, 233.
Marmont to
Joseph, July
25, 1812.
Ibid. 664.
Nap. v. 171.

the battle; for its fate was already decided by the scattered position of the French divisions and the suddenness of the British attack.

It was just five o'clock when Pakenham fell on Thomière, who, so far from being prepared for such an onset, had just reached an open hill, the last of the ridge over which his division had extended, from whence he expected to see the Allied army in full retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo, and, closely pursued by Marmont, defiling in the valley before him. To effect a change of front in such circumstances was impossible; all that could be done was to resist as they stood. The British columns formed into line as they marched, so that the moment they came in sight of the enemy they were ready to charge. In an instant the French gunners were at their pieces; and a crowd of light troops hurried to the front, and endeavoured by a rapid fire to cover the formation of the troops behind. Vain attempt! Right onward through the storm of bullets did the British line, led by the heroic Pakenham, advance; the light troops were dispersed before them like chaff before the wind; the half-formed lines were broken into fragments; D'Urban's Portuguese cavalry, supported by Harvey's English dragoons, and Arentschild's incomparable German horse, turned their left flank, scrambled up the steep sides of a bush-fringed stream which flowed behind the ridge, and got into their rear; while their right was already menaced by Leith with the fifth division. Encompassed in this manner with enemies, Thomière's division was forced backward along the ridge; yet they retired not at first in confusion, but skilfully, like gallant veterans, seizing every successive wood and hill which offered the means of arresting the enemy. Gradually, however, the reflux and pressing together of so large a body by enemies at once in front and on flank, threw their array into confusion: their cavalry were routed and driven among the foot; Thomière himself was killed while striving to arrest the torrent; the Allied cavalry broke in like a flood into the openings of the infantry; and the whole division was thrown back, utterly routed, with the loss of three thousand prisoners, on Clausel's, which was hurrying up to its aid from the forest.¹

Nearly at the same time that this splendid success was

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

75.

Total defeat
of the French
left under
Thomière.

¹ Nap. v. 170,
171. Wellington to Lord
Bathurst,
July 23,
1812. Garw.
ix. 303.
Jones, ii. 137,
Belm. i. 233.
Vict. et Conq
xxi. 47, 48.
Beamish, ii.
74, 75.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

76.

Splendid
charge of the
British cav-
alry on
Clausel's
division.

gained on the extreme British right, Cole and Leith, with their respective divisions, moved forward at a rapid pace against the part of the enemy's left composed of Clausel's division, which was hastily formed to oppose them,—flanked by Le Marchant's heavy dragoons and Anson's light cavalry, all led by Sir Stapleton Cotton. While the French were warmly engaged with the infantry, who were gaining ground on them, in front, a cloud of dust suddenly filled an opening in the line between them and Pakenham: a loud trampling was heard, and out of it suddenly burst a glittering band of helmets, which at full speed came thundering down on their already shaken and bewildered lines. Hardly any resistance was attempted; whole companies threw down their arms and fled; the long swords of the British dragoons gleamed aloft as they passed shouting through the broken crowd; five guns were taken by Lord Edward Somerset with a single squadron; two thousand prisoners were made in a few minutes, and the whole French left, utterly broken and disordered, was thrown back into the wood in its rear, and, in a military point of view, annihilated. Great as this success was, it was dearly purchased by the death of the brave Le Marchant, who fell in the moment of victory, while carrying the standards of England triumphantly through the ranks of France.¹*

¹ Gurw. ix.
304. Nap. v.
172, 173.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 47.
Jones, ii. 108.

* John Gaspard Le Marchant, called Gaspard after the great Admiral Coligni, a collateral ancestor, was born at Guernsey, in the year 1767. He was born of an ancient and highly respectable family, which had long held magisterial offices in the island, and borne arms in the service of Great Britain. He received the rudiments of his education at Dr Morgan's school at Bath, where he was chiefly known by a stand-up fight with a boy of much superior strength, the terror of the school, afterwards Sir Sidney Smith. On leaving school he applied closely to study; but his passion for a military life being clearly evinced, he was placed at sixteen in the York Militia, from whence at eighteen he was transferred to the Royals, then quartered in Dublin. There his commanding figure, fearless courage, and gentlemanlike manners, soon introduced him into the best society, and led to an acquaintance, which soon ripened into intimate friendship, with the Marquis of Buckingham, then Lord-lieutenant. In 1784, when at Gibraltar, he lost £200 in gambling; and being fearful of disclosing a debt of such a nature to his father, he borrowed the sum from the paymaster, and gave proof of the strength of his character by resolutely withdrawing for three years from the mess, till the whole was repaid. In 1787 he purchased a cornetcy in the Enniskillen Dragoons. His conduct in that regiment was so exemplary, that it soon led to his being given the command of the guard of honour which escorted the King to Weymouth. This led to an introduction to the royal circle: his drawings on the coast of Barbary, which were very beautiful, were much admired; his elegant manners attracted general notice; and he soon became such a favourite that, by the express desire of the King, he was promoted to a lieutenantancy in the Bays, in which he soon after acquired a troop. He was soon after married to Miss Carey, a young lady of equal beauty and worth, in Guernsey, to whom he had been long attached. In 1793 he landed, with the expedition under Lord Moira, at Ostend, and soon after

Meanwhile, a bloody and more doubtful contest was going on in the centre, where Pack's Portuguese advanced against the French Arapeiles, and the fourth and fifth divisions, headed by Leith and Cole, after clearing the village of Arapeiles, had driven Bonnet's troops backwards, step by step, and with hard fighting, upon the broken remains of Clausel's and Thomière's divisions. As soon as the combatants had passed the village of the French Arapeiles, the rock was assailed; but every where the most vigorous resistance was experienced. Pack's men gallantly ascended the rugged height; already they were within thirty yards of the summit, driving the enemy's skirmishers before them, when a loud shout arose, and the French masses, hitherto concealed, leaped out from among the rocks on their front and flank, and suddenly closed with their adversaries. The struggle was only of a few moments' duration; a stream of fire, followed by a thick cloud of smoke, burst forth like a burning volcano on the summit of the hill, and immediately the Portuguese were seen flying in disorder, closely followed by the French, to the bottom. This check was attended with still more serious consequences; for the fourth division, which by this time had got abreast of the French Arapeiles, still driving

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

77.

Repulse of
the British
in the centre,
and at the
French
Arapeiles.

behaved with such gallantry in a successful charge against the French camp at Cassel, garrisoned by thirty thousand men, that he was specially thanked in the public orders by Count Hohenzollern, who commanded the Allies. He bore an active and distinguished part in the campaigns of 1793 and 1794; and having returned to England on the withdrawal of the Allies from Flanders, his regiment was again stationed at Weymouth, where he composed a "Code of Instructions for the Sword Exercise," which was soon adopted by the Duke of York, and forms a permanent part of the regulations of the army: it continued in observance during the whole war, to the ultimate success of which it not a little contributed. This led to his turning his attention to the swords worn by the cavalry, and the pattern he selected was soon adopted by the army, and continues to be used to the present day. In 1797 he published a new edition of his work on the cavalry exercise, which has since gone through five large impressions. Soon after he prepared a work on military education, which was submitted to, and highly approved by, the Duke of York, and led to many interviews with that prince, which terminated in the establishment of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, of which he was appointed lieutenant-governor. Great difficulties were experienced in the early period of this establishment, which his temper, perseverance, and industry were mainly instrumental in overcoming. In 1811 he was promoted to the rank of major-general, and soon after removed from his important duties at the Military College to the more arduous charge of commanding a brigade in the field. He was there actively engaged till his career was terminated by a glorious death at Salamanca. It is remarkable that Guernsey has given birth to two of the most distinguished heroes in the land and sea services, General Le Marchant and Sir James Saumarez.—See a very interesting Memoir, printed for private circulation, of General Le Marchant, by his son Sir Denis Le Marchant, to whose kindness the author is indebted for a copy of that rare and interesting work.

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1812.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 23,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 304. Nap.
v. 174, 175.
Kausler,
864, 865.

Bonnet's troops before them, was suddenly assailed in flank by three battalions and some horse, who had descended from the hill or stole round its shelter, in all the pride of victory; while, at the same time, twelve hundred fresh adversaries, starting upon the reverse side of the slope which they had so painfully won, poured in a volley in front. Notwithstanding all their gallantry, the fourth division was unable to withstand this double attack; the men staggered; Cole and Leith were both wounded: and at length, finding their rear menaced by some of Maucunne's battalions, now disengaged by the repulse at the Arapeiles, they broke and fled in disorder down the ascent.¹

78.
Wellington
and Beresford
restore the
battle in the
centre.

These important advantages in the centre were immediately followed up with uncommon vigour by the French generals. Bonnet was wounded; but Clausel took the command, and by his able dispositions, had wellnigh restored the battle. Ferey's troops vigorously assailed the front of the fourth division, and pursued them into the hollow behind: Brennier did the same to the fifth, and that gallant body being uncovered on the left, where the fourth division had stood, was overlapped and lost ground; while a body of cavalry, which had been concealed behind the Arapeiles, issued forth and fiercely assailed even Clinton's reserve division in the centre in flank. The crisis of the battle had arrived: every thing depended on the immediate bringing up of reserves to the centre, where the decisive blows were to be struck. Beresford, who happened to be at hand, was the first who arrested the disorder. With great presence of mind he brought up a brigade of the fifth division, and caused it to change its formation and face outwards, so as to show a front to the troops of the enemy who had issued from the hollows behind the Arapeiles. This movement checked the incursion in that quarter; and Beresford had the satisfaction of perceiving the danger abated before he received a wound which compelled him to leave the field. Meanwhile Wellington, who, throughout the whole day, was to be seen in every part of the action where danger required his presence, hastened to the spot, and immediately ordered up Clinton's division from the rear; and their charge upon the enemy, already somewhat disor-

dered by success, proved entirely successful. The men of Halse's brigade, which formed the left of that division, and consequently was most exposed, were swept away by hundreds; they never for an instant, however, flinched, but, marching steadily forward with the 11th and 61st regiments in the van, regained all the ground which had been lost; an impetuous charge of the French dragoons only for an instant arrested the 53d; the southern ridge, which had been lost, was regained; Ferey was mortally, Clausel slightly, wounded; over the whole centre the steady courage of the Allies prevailed; and "the Allied host, righting itself like a gallant ship after a sudden gust, again bore onwards in blood and gloom; for though the air, purified by the storm of the evening before, was peculiarly clear, one vast cloud of smoke and dust rolled along the basin, and within it was the battle, with all its sights and sounds of terror."¹

Notwithstanding the failure of his efforts to change the fate of the day in the centre, Clausel skilfully bore up against the torrent, and manfully strove to collect such a body of troops as might make head against the victors, and prevent the defeat, now inevitable, from being converted into total ruin. Foy's division, which formed the extreme right of the French, was now coming into action, and the balls from his pieces already fell in the British ranks; the broken remains of the left were blended with the centre, and both, retiring together towards the right, soon formed a compact body, which took post on the heights behind the Ariba streamlet, and presented a regular line in front of the forest, to cover the retreat of the reserve parks and artillery, and flight of the fugitives, who were hurrying in disorder through its lanes towards Alba de Tormes. Wellington immediately took measures to drive this strong rearguard from its ground, and complete the victory. The first and light divisions, with part of the fourth, which was re-formed, were directed to turn their right; while Clinton's and Pakenham's divisions, with Hope's and the Spaniards in reserve, assailed their front. The French, who were in hopes the British army had exhausted itself in the affray, were astonished to see a new host rise, as if out of the earth, at its close; but nevertheless they made a gallant defence. Foy's light

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Nap. v.
175, 177.
Gurw. ix.
304, 305.
Jones, ii. 107,
108. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
47, 48.
Kausler, 864,
865.

79.

Last stand
and final de-
feat of the
French.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 23,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 304, 305.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 47, 48.
Nap. v. 177,
179. Jones,
ii. 108, 109.
Kausler, 865.

troops and guns, with admirable skill, took advantage of every knoll and thicket, to arrest the pursuers; and the marshy stream which ran from the wood down to the Tormes, and washed the foot of his last defensible ridge, was obstinately contested. Nevertheless the British, animated by their success, pressed incessantly on; the stream was forced: and Clinton and Pakenham mounted the ridge, on the top of which the last French rearguard, composed of Maucunne's division, was stationed. Aided by a brigade of the fourth division, these noble troops ascended the steep just as darkness set in: the flames vomited from the artillery on its summit, and the sparkling line of musketry along its crest guided their steps; the chasms in their ranks showed how severely they suffered from the fire. But when they reached the summit Maucunne's task was fulfilled: the dazzling line of light disappeared, the forest had engulfed the foe, and the victors stood alone on the sable hill.¹

80.
Wellington
pursues in the
wrong direc-
tion.

While the last flames of this terrible conflagration were thus expiring on the ridge of Ariba, Wellington, marching in person with the leading regiment of the light division, was making direct across the fields for Huerta and the fords of the Tormes, by which the enemy had passed on their advance, in the hope that the fugitives would push for the same passage, as the castle of Alba de Tormes, which commanded the only other way of getting across the river, was in the hands of the Spaniards in the morning, and the French were in no plight to have forced the passage. That fort, however, now become of vital importance to the beaten army, had been evacuated during the day by the Spanish colonel who held it, and his commander, Don Carlos d'Espana, had not even informed Wellington of the fact. Thus the pursuit of the light division was turned in the wrong direction; and the French, who were well aware that the passage in their rear was open, all took that direction, and reached Alba de Tormes without further molestation. This circumstance, joined to the darkness setting in just as their last rearguard was driven from its ground, alone saved the French army from total destruction;² for if either daylight had lasted two hours longer, or Alba de Tormes had been held by the Spaniards, two-thirds of their number and

² Nap. v.
179, 181.
Gurw. ix.
305. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
48. Marmon
to Joseph,
July 24,
1812. Belm.
i. No. 103,
and 104.
Appendix, p.
666.

their whole artillery must, from Wellington having reached the fords first, have been captured.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

8L
Results of the
battle.

The battle of Salamanca, however, such as it was, undoubtedly was one of the greatest blows struck by any nation during the whole Revolutionary war. The loss on the part of the Allies was five thousand two hundred men, of whom three thousand one hundred and seventy-six were British, two thousand and eighteen Portuguese, and only eight Spanish—a fair index, probably, to the proportions in which the weight of the contest had fallen on the three nations. The French loss has never been divulged; but if the victors lost above five thousand in killed and wounded, it may be presumed that the vanquished in so decisive an overthrow would have to lament at least seven thousand fallen or disabled in the fight; and in addition to this, the victors took one hundred and thirty-four officers and seven thousand private soldiers prisoners, besides two eagles, six standards, and eleven cannon, wrested from them in fair fight. The French loss, therefore, may fairly be taken at fourteen thousand men. But this result does not rest on approximation or conjecture; for there exists decisive evidence, on the best of all authorities—that of General Clausel himself—that three weeks after the battle he could only collect twenty-two thousand men on the Douro to make head against the English army,* although it was proved by intercepted returns immediately before it, that Marmont's strength had been forty-four thousand actually with the eagles, independent of six thousand two hundred in the Asturias, and the garrisons lost in the forts.†

* “I have reached the Douro with the whole army. The difficulty of finding subsistence for the troops is almost insurmountable; all the inhabitants have taken to flight, and the numerous bands of guerillas remove by force such as would remain. Thus the cultivator, if he escape assassination from our soldiers, is sure to be punished, imprisoned, or carried off by the guerillas, if he remains in the neighbourhood of the French army. The consequence is, that the army is obliged to seek its provisions in presence of the enemy, and it is always in want of every thing. Our position in the middle of Castile is exactly what it was in Portugal, which was the cause of our ruin. I have taken the most vigorous measures to arrest the disorders: more than fifty soldiers have been seized by the provost-marshal, and executed; the officers see that they will be punished also if they do not arrest the disorders they have tolerated, which have produced an abominable spirit in the army. *The army consists of twenty thousand infantry, eighteen hundred horse, and fifty guns.* I hope that four or five thousand marauders, who have followed the convoys to Burgos and Vittoria, murdering and pillaging the whole way, will yet rejoin their colours.”—CLAUSEL to DUKE DE FELTRE, Minister-at-War, *Valladolid*, 18th August 1812; BELMAS, i. 673.

† “From the enclosed intercepted returns, the Army of Portugal consisted on

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
July 23,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 305, 309.
Jones, ii, 169.
Kausler, 865.
Nap. 180.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 48.

The French, therefore, during the action and retreat, must have been weakened to the extent of twenty-two thousand, or half their army; a result which, how great soever, is easily accounted for, if the magnitude of the defeat, and subsequent losses, and the absolute necessity to which the French soldiers were reduced of straggling in quest of subsistence, from no magazines being provided by their generals, is taken into consideration. On the French side, Generals Ferey, Thomière, and Des Gravières, were killed, and Marshal Marmont, and Generals Bonnet, Clausel, and Monnot wounded. The Allies had to lament the loss of General Le Marchant killed, and Generals Beresford, Stapleton Cotton, Leith, Cole, and Alten wounded. Wellington himself was struck by a spent ball in the thigh; but, like Napoleon and Julius Cæsar, he bore a charmed life, and it did him no serious injury.¹

82.
Brilliant
charge of the
German dra-
goons on the
French rear-
guard.
July 23.

With admirable diligence, Clausel got his whole army across the river at Alba de Tormes, during the night; and with such expedition was the retreat conducted, that, although Wellington was in motion next morning by daylight, and moved straight in that direction it was not till noon that the British came up with the rearguard, who were posted near La Serna. Such was the depression which prevailed among the French cavalry, that they gave way on the first appearance of the Allied horse, and left the infantry to their fate. The foot-soldiers, however, stood firm, and formed, with great readiness, three squares on the slope of the hill which they were ascending, to resist the squadrons which soon came thundering upon them. The charge was made by Bock's German, and Anson's brigade of English dragoons; and is remarkable as being one of the few instances in the whole Revolutionary war, in which, on a fair field, and without being previously shaken by cannon, infantry in square were broken by cavalry. The German horse first charged, on two faces, the nearest square, which was lowest down the hill.² The French soldiers stood firm, and the front rank,

² Gurw. ix.
305. Bea-
mish, ii. 83,
85. Belm. i.
234. Vict. et
Conq. xxi. 52.

the 1st April, of 65,597 men, of whom 51,492 are effective, fit for duty; of these 48,396 are infantry, 3204 cavalry, and 3393 artillery. There are besides 1500 infantry and 1000 horse at Salamanca; which, deducting 6200 under Bonnet in the Asturias, will leave 43,800 infantry and 4000 cavalry in the field, with 98 guns."—WELLINGTON to SIR J. GRAHAM, 14th June 1812; GURWOOD, ix. 238.

kneeling, received the gallant horsemen with the rolling fire of the Pyramids ; but a cloud of dust, which preceded the horses, obscured their aim ; a single horse, which dashed forward and fell upon the bayonets, formed an opening ; at the entrance thus accidentally made, the furious dragoons rushed in, and in a few seconds the whole square were sabred or made prisoners.

Encouraged by this success, Bock's men next charged the second square, which also received them with a rolling fire ; but their courage was shaken by the fearful catastrophe they had just witnessed ; a few of them broke from their ranks and fled ; and the whole now wavering, the horsemen dashed in, and the greater part of the battalion was cut down or taken. Not content with these triumphs, the unwearied Germans prepared to charge the third square, to which the fugitives from the two others had now fled, and which was at the top of the hill, supported by some horse who had come up to their assistance. The French cavalry were speedily dispersed, and the square was in like manner broken by an impetuous charge of this irresistible cavalry. In this glorious combat, the Germans had above one hundred men killed and wounded ; but nearly the whole of the enemy's infantry, consisting of three battalions, were cut down or made captives. The prisoners taken were about twelve hundred. This action deserves to be noticed in a particular manner, as having been, on the enemy's own admission, the most brilliant cavalry affair which occurred during the war.^{1*}

After this defeat of their rearguard, the French army fell into great confusion ; and, there being no supplies

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

83.
Two other
squares are
broken by the
German
horse.

¹ Beamish,
ii. 83, 85.
Gurw. ix.
305. Jones,
ii. 110. Belm.
i. 234. Vict.
et Conq. xxi.
52, 53. Nap.
v. 182, 183.

* "The boldest charge during the war was made the day after the battle of Salamanca, by the Hanoverian general Bock, at the head of the heavy brigade of the King's German Legion."—Foy's *Guerre de la Péninsule*, i. 290. Colonel Napier, who is not favourable to cavalry as an arm in war, hardly seems to do justice to his brave comrades, the Germans, in this action, though he admits their uncommon gallantry.—Compare NAPIER, v. 184 ; and BEAMISH's *King's German Legion*, ii. 83, 85.—Napier says merely that the dragoons "surmounted the difficulties of the ground, and went clean through the square: then the squares above retreated, and several hundred prisoners were made by these able and daring horsemen."—v. 183. This is hardly the due account of a charge which Wellington says "was one of the most gallant he ever witnessed, and by which the whole body of the enemy's infantry, consisting of three battalions, were made prisoners." (GURWOOD, ix. 305)—which JONES says took nine hundred prisoners, (ii. 110)—which BELMAS admits destroyed nine hundred men, (i. 234)—and which BEAMISH, in the *Annals of the King's German Legion*, asserts took nearly fourteen hundred prisoners, (ii. 85.)

CHAP.
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84.
Rapid retreat
of the French
to Valladolid.

July 24.

July 29.

July 30.

1 Nap. v. 185,

186. Jones,

ii. 111. Wel-

lington to

Lord

Bathurst,

Aug. 4, 1812.

Gurw. ix.

330, 331.

Vict. et Conq.

xxi. 52, 53.

Aug. 6.

whatever for the troops, numbers dispersed in every direction in quest of subsistence. But with such extraordinary celerity was this retreat conducted, that Clausel's headquarters were at Flores de Avila, no less than *forty miles* from the field of battle, on the first night after it,—a prodigious stretch, in little more than twelve hours, for any army, but especially for one which on the preceding day had undergone the fatigues of a desperate battle. By this forced march, however, the French general both got beyond the reach of farther molestation from his pursuers, and joined Caffarelli's artillery and horsemen, fifteen hundred strong, who were advancing from the army of the north, and took the place of the discomfited and wearied rearguard. Still continuing their retreat with rapid strides, they crossed the Douro, and never stopped till they got to Valladolid. Wellington continued the pursuit beyond that river to the same place, where he took seventeen cannon, and eight hundred sick; but seeing no prospect of coming up with the enemy, who were retiring towards Burgos, and aware that they were disabled, for a considerable time, from undertaking any active operation, having been reduced to half their numbers, he desisted from the pursuit, recrossed the Douro, and moved against the army of the centre and Madrid. He left Clinton, with his division and Anson's horse, and the Galicians under Santocildes, to make head against the army of the north in his absence.^{1*}

85.
Retreat of
Joseph
towards
Madrid.

Joseph was at Blasco Sancho on the 25th, when he received the stunning intelligence of the defeat, and was made aware by Clausel that he was unable to keep the field to the south of the Douro, and must immediately cross that river, in order to preserve his depots at Valladolid and Burgos. By a rapid movement upon Arevalo Joseph could still have effected a junction with the army of Portugal; but he wisely declined to link his fortunes with those of a beaten and dejected host, and retraced his

* At Olmedo, which the British entered on the 27th, the brave French general Ferey died of his wounds. The Spaniards had forced the body from the grave before the English soldiers came up; but when the light division arrived, the men rescued the remains of their gallant antagonist in arms from his infuriated enemies, re-made the grave, and heaped rocks upon it for additional security. Recalled to their better feelings by this generous action, the Spaniards applauded the deed.—See NAPIER, v. 185-6.

steps towards Madrid, in order to preserve his communication with the unbroken forces under Soult in Andalusia, and Suchet in Valencia. Unwilling, however, as long as he could avoid it, to repass the Guadarama, he moved first to Segovia, from whence he sent positive orders to Soult to evacuate Andalusia, and join him on the frontiers of La Mancha; and at the same time transmitted to the minister of war at Paris the most bitter complaints against all his marshals, whose jealousies and separate interests rendered them, he affirmed, insensible to the public good, and doomed him to be the impotent spectator of the Emperor's and his kingdom's ruin.¹

He was soon obliged, however, by the approach of the British, to abandon Segovia, and retreat across the Guadarama, where he was speedily followed by the Allies, who on the 11th crossed the ridge, and occupied the Escorial. Joseph, with two thousand horse, was at Naval Carnero, to watch and retard the movements of the British; and a reconnoissance, made by him in the evening, brought on a shock at Majalahonda with the Portuguese cavalry under General D'Urban, which formed the advanced guard of the Allies. These squadrons, though they had behaved with great gallantry at the battle of Salamanca, were on this occasion seized with an unaccountable panic, and turned about before they reached the enemy, overthrowing in their flight three guns of horse-artillery, which in consequence fell into the hands of the French cavalry. The German horse, however, who were immediately brought up to repair the disorder, behaved with their accustomed gallantry, and checked the pursuers, though not without a considerable loss to themselves;²

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1 Belm. i.
672. Vict.
et Conq. xxi.
53, 54.
Gurw. ix.
349.

86.
Action at
Majalahonda,
in which the
Portuguese
are worsted.
Aug. 11.

2 Joseph to
Soult, July
29, 1812.
Belm. i. 672.
Wellington to
Lord Bath-
urst, Aug.
13, 1812.
Gurw. ix.
349. Jones,
ii. 112. Vict.
et Conq. xxi.
53, 54.

* "The few troops at my command, in the Army of the Centre, are assembled in the environs of Madrid. The whole provinces of the centre are evacuated, and even the important positions of Somo-sierra and Buytrago. I should not have been reduced to these painful extremities, if the general-in-chief of the army of the north had obeyed the instructions I have so often given him, to succour, at all hazards, the Army of Portugal, and abandon for the moment all lesser points, as I have just done. I repeat it, M. Duke, if the Emperor cannot discover means to make the generals of the north, of Aragon, and of the south obey me, Spain is lost, and with it the French army. I have always told you, and I now repeat it, because affairs are daily becoming more urgent, that the generals who attend only to their own provinces, and not to the general result of the operations, ought to be dismissed as an example to their successors, who should be instructed, in the first instance, to obey me; and that I should no longer be condemned, as heretofore, to be the impotent spectator of the dishonour of our arms, and the loss of the country."—JOSEPH to DUKE DE FELTRE, Minister-at-War, July 18, 1812; BELMAS, i. 662, 663, App.

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which in all amounted to three hundred men. The French again retired, after burning the gun-carriages they had taken; and on the same evening the Allied advanced posts were pushed to the neighbourhood of Madrid.

87.
Great agitation in Madrid at the approach of the English army.

Great was the consternation which prevailed in that capital at the near approach of the English army. Rumour, with its hundred tongues, had even exaggerated the disasters of the French troops; faction was abashed in the awful presence of patriotic triumph; selfish ambition sank into the earth at the prospect of the immediate overthrow of its golden dreams. Straitened as the court of Joseph had been for a long period, there was yet a multitude of persons who were implicated in its fortunes, and beheld with alarm the prospect of its overthrow. The monarch had collected round the seat of government a great number of idle retainers, and all that multitude of dependants, numerous in every country, but especially so in one so full of proud hidalgos as Spain, who are destitute of all public principle, and ready to accept the wages of servitude from any master who possesses the reins of power. The long continuance also of the war, and continued occupation of the capital by the French armies, had inspired a great number of persons of good feelings, but no extraordinary firmness, with the belief that the French power was irresistible; and they had, in consequence, become involved, more or less, with the Napoleon dynasty. All these individuals felt themselves at once exposed to the overthrow of their fortunes, and possibly the last extremities of popular vengeance; and therefore they began in excessive alarm to prepare for their departure, as soon as the English advanced posts were seen on the southern side of the Guadarama range.¹

¹ Tor. v. 77.
Jones, ii. 113.
South. vi. 48,
49.

88.
Great joy of the middle and working classes.

On the other hand, the working classes, who had suffered extremely from the long occupation of the capital by the enemy, the continued suspension of commerce, the absence of the landed proprietors, and the exorbitant taxes by which Joseph, in the little circle around the metropolis, which alone was really subject to his authority, had endeavoured to realise a scanty revenue for the support of his court, were extravagant in their joy at their approaching deliverance; and even the presence of the French troops could hardly prevent them from giving

vent to it in every possible way. The taxes had become most oppressive. All the old imposts, though nominally repealed, were in fact collected as rigidly as before; and, in addition to them, a multitude of new duties on corn, oil, meat, and vegetables. Forced loans had repeatedly been exacted from the wealthier classes; and a tax, first of eight, then ten, then fifteen per cent had been imposed on all houses. Employment there was none. The hospitals were crowded with sick and starving poor; and of the persons who had died in the first six months of 1812, two-thirds had perished of actual want. Then, as is usually the case on the eve of a great civil convulsion, the people were variously affected by hope or terror, according as their interests were likely to be affected by the approaching change. But none viewed it with indifference; every heart was agitated, and few eyelids were closed in Madrid the night before the British entered the city.¹

The population of the capital had been reduced, by the French occupation and devastation of the country, to a third of its former amount; but the people in the surrounding districts were highly excited when they heard that Joseph and his court were retiring; and when the long and mournful trains set out, on the evening of the 11th, for Toledo, crowds from all quarters hastened to Madrid to witness the entrance of their deliverers on the following morning. Long before the British soldiers were seen on the Guadarama road, every balcony, every window, every door was crowded with eager multitudes: joy beamed on every countenance; and the general exultation had led the people to array themselves in the best remaining attire in their possession, so that it could hardly have been imagined to what an extent misery had previously existed. No words can express the enthusiasm which prevailed when the English standards were seen in the distance, and the scarlet uniforms began to be discerned through the crowd. Amidst a countless multitude, wrought up to the very highest pitch of rapturous feeling; amidst tears of gratitude and shouts of triumph; through throngs resounding with exultation and balconies graced by beauty; to the sound of military music and with the pomp of military power—the British army made

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¹ Tor. v. 77.
South vi. 48,
49. Jones, ii.
113.

89.
Entrance of
the British
into Madrid,
and enthusi-
astic joy of
the inhabi-
tants.
Aug. 12.

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their entrance into the Spanish capital, not as conquerors but as friends, not as oppressors but deliverers. On that day their chief drank deep of "the purest, holiest, draught of power." The crowd came forth to meet him, not with courtly adulation or bought applause, but with heartfelt gratitude and deep enthusiasm; for famine had been among them, and the wan cheeks and trickling eyes of the multitude who thronged round him to kiss his hand, or touch his horse, bespoke the magnitude of the evils from which he had delivered them. Incredible were the efforts made to manifest the universal transports. Garlands of flowers were displayed from every door; festoons of drapery descended from every balcony; men, women, and children, came pouring out of every house to welcome their deliverers, eagerly pressing on them fruits and refreshments, and seeking to grasp the hands which had freed their country. In the evening a general illumination gave vent to the universal rapture: all distinctions of rank, sex, and profession were forgotten in the festive blaze; and the servitude of four years seemed to be lost in the intoxicating joy of the first moments of emancipation.¹

¹ Tor. v. 77,
78. Jones,
ii. 113, 114.
South. vi. 51,
52. Nap. v.
194.

90.
Siege and
capture of the
Retiro.

But while his troops were indulging in contemplation of the glorious scene, and officers and men alike were sharing in the festivities provided for them by the gratitude of the citizens, and feeling "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude,"* the anxious mind of their chief was revolving the means of securing the fruits of this important conquest, and maintaining the brilliant but hazardous position which he had won in the centre of Spain. The Retiro was still in the enemy's hands, garrisoned by seventeen hundred men; but its possession was of the very highest importance, as it contained the greatest arsenal of military stores and artillery which the French possessed in the country; and its loss would entirely disable them, now that the Ciudad Rodrigo train had fallen into the hands of the British, from undertaking the siege of any considerable fortress for a long period of time. Its defences were immediately reconnoitred, and were found to consist of a double set of intrenchments; one so large that an army would have been required for its defence,

Aug. 13.

* Sir R. Peel.

the other so contracted that the troops, if driven into it, could hardly be expected to withstand a vigorous cannonade. Wellington took his measures accordingly. Preparations were made for assaulting the outer intrenchments, and guns placed in battery to annihilate the enemy when he was shut up in the interior fort. These preparations, rapidly completed, had the desired effect: the commander, knowing the weakness of his post, no sooner saw the assaulting columns formed, than he hastened to make his submission; and the fort was surrendered at discretion, with its whole garrison, one hundred and eighty pieces of artillery, twenty thousand stand of arms, and immense magazines of carriages, clothing, and military stores of all kinds. On the same day Don Carlos D'Espana was appointed governor of Madrid, and the constitution proclaimed with great solemnity in the principal public places, amidst shouting crowds, who fondly persuaded themselves that the Spaniards had now established their freedom, as well as achieved their independence, and that, having gained the privileges, they were at once to evince the intelligence and earn the fame of the citizens of Athens and Lacedæmon.¹

Meanwhile Joseph, who had retreated on the road to Aranjuez, was reduced to the most grievous state of perplexity. At the head of only twelve thousand soldiers, he was followed by a motley crowd of above twenty thousand persons of both sexes, and all ages and conditions, who were linked to the fortunes of his court, and whose loud lamentations, clamorous importunity, and real destitution, added inexpressibly to the difficulties of his situation. The mournful procession, which extended almost the whole way from Madrid to Aranjuez, resembled rather those lugubrious troops of captives leaving their homes under the stern severity of ancient war, of which classic eloquence has left us such moving portraits, than any of the ordinary events of modern warfare. The line of the soldiers' march was broken in upon by crowds of weeping women and wailing children; courtiers, even of the highest rank, were seen desperately contending with common soldiers for the animals which transported their families; multitudes of persons, bred in affluence and unused to hardship, eagerly sought from casual passen-

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¹ South. vi.
52, 53.
Jones, ii. 113,
114. Tor. v.
78, 79.
Gurw. ix.
354, 355.
Nap. v. 194,
195.

91.
Deplorable
state of
Joseph on his
retiring from
Madrid.

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¹ Soult to
Joseph, July
16, 1811.
Belm. i. 655.
Suchet to
Joseph, June
30, 1812.
Ibid. i. 659.
Nap. v. 192,
193.

92.
General
breaking up
of the French
power in
Spain.
Aug. 13.

July 30.

Aug. 19.
Aug. 21.
Aug. 15.
² Jones, ii.
115. Nap. v.
194. Vict. et
Cong. xxi.
55, 58.

gers the necessities of life. The unhappy monarch had earnestly besought help from Suchet, and had been unsuccessful; he had commanded Soult to send ten thousand men to his aid at Toledo, and had met with a positive refusal. Thus, destitute alike of friends, consideration, or authority, he was surrounded by a starving crowd of needy dependents: he had literally all the burdens of a crown without either its power, its respect, or its means of beneficence. Such was the miserable condition of this immense array, that the cavalry alone of the Allies would have sufficed to have driven the whole into the Tagus; and the bridge of Aranjuez might have renewed the horrors of the passage of the Loire,* or anticipated those of the Berezina. But Wellington restrained his soldiers, and suffered the crowd to pass over in safety, humanely feeling that the deliverance of the Spanish capital should not be sullied by the massacre of a considerable part of its citizens, and wisely judging that it was not politic to disembarass a fugitive monarch of a crowd of useless and destitute retainers.¹

The French affairs in every part of the Peninsula now exhibited that general crash and ruin which so usually follow a great military disaster, and presage the breaking up of political power. At the same time that the Retiro, with its immense warlike stores, yielded to the arms of Wellington, Guadalaxara, with its garrison of seven hundred men, surrendered to those of the Empecinado, who had so long maintained a guerilla warfare in the mountains in its vicinity; three hundred men had recently before been captured by the partidas near Valladolid; six thousand were shut up and blockaded in Toro, Tordesillas, and Zamora on the Douro; Astorga, long closely besieged, at last surrendered with twelve hundred men; soon after Torden with three hundred capitulated; the castle of Mirabete, near Almarez, had already been blown up; Talavera and the Puerto de Banos were evacuated, and the French troops in the valley of the Tagus withdrawn to the neighbourhood of Aranjuez.²

Symptoms also of the evacuation of Andalusia at no distant period were already apparent. In the middle of August the castle of Niebla was destroyed, and the whole district of the same name abandoned. All the archives

* *Ante*, Chap. xii. § 68.

and valuable effects at Seville were packed up, and the defences of the Cartusa convent in its neighbourhood materially strengthened; while an unusual degree of bustle in the lines in front of Cadiz led to the suspicion that the French were about to retire from their position before that city. No decided movement, however, to that effect took place till the news arrived of the capture of Madrid; but no sooner was it received, than the sudden bursting forth of fierce conflagrations in various parts of their lines, and violent explosions in all directions, announced that the long-beleagured city was to be delivered. At nine on the following morning the British and Spanish troops made a general sortie, and found the intrenchments deserted, and the work of destruction already far advanced. In a moment the labour of three years had been set at nought: the gigantic intrenchments, constructed at so incredible a cost of time and money, were abandoned; the principal forts were consigned to the flames; while the rapid approach of the besieged rescued from destruction enormous stores of shot and other warlike implements, which, with five hundred pieces of cannon mounted on the works, besides an equal number which had been destroyed before the garrison came up, constituted the proud warlike trophies of the battle of Salamanca.¹

The situation of Wellington was now in the highest degree brilliant; and the consequences which had already attended his exertions, both demonstrated the magnitude of the blow which had been struck, and the skill with which the quarter in which it was delivered had been selected. Never was a more just observation than that made by Napoleon at the very outset of the war,* "that the fate of the Peninsula was to be determined in the neighbourhood of Valladolid; for a stroke delivered there would paralyse all Spain." Already from its effects his power had been loosened in every quarter: the valley of the Tagus had been abandoned, that of the Douro conquered; Madrid had fallen into the hands of the Allies; Andalusia was in the course of being abandoned by the French. What was of more importance in a military point of view, the

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1812.

93.

Destruction
of the lines
before Cadiz,
and raising of
the blockade
of that city.

Aug. 25.

Aug. 26.

¹ Jones, ii.
115, 116, 119.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 55, 61.
Nap. v. 194,
241.

94.

Advantages
and dangers
of Wellin-
gton's position.

* *Ante*, Chap. liv. § 18.

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army of the north was now irrevocably separated from that of the centre : the former, not above twenty thousand strong, was thrown back, routed and discouraged, into the neighbourhood of Burgos ; the latter, encumbered with a host of fugitives, was flying in dismay over the plains of La Mancha. But these, certainly great advantages, were counterbalanced by corresponding dangers ; and to the eye which, undazzled by present events, looked forward to the future issue of things, there were many causes for anxiety in the prospects of the English general, and not the least were those which gave the greatest lustre to his present situation. The power of the French in Spain had been loosened, not destroyed : one victory, and the capture of two fortresses, could not overthrow the fabric reared by four years of conquest. The abandonment of the remoter provinces by the imperial generals, would only augment the force which they could concentrate in the heart of the monarchy ; and woful experience had sufficiently demonstrated that no reliance was to be placed on Spanish co-operation, and that the liberation even of the richest provinces brought no corresponding accession of strength to the standards of Wellington. Thus, disaster might possibly in reality improve the situation of the French generals ; and, by compelling them to concentrate their forces, and loosen their hold of the remoter parts of Spain, be the means of bringing an overwhelming force against Wellington in its centre.

Soult, even before matters had arrived at their present critical situation, had long entertained lofty, and yet reasonable, views regarding the maintenance of the French power in the Peninsula. Though they were founded, as those of all the marshals at that period were, upon the immediate interests of his own province, and proposed an arrangement which was to bring him into the supreme direction of its military affairs, yet it is doubtful whether, by any other combination, an equally formidable force could have been brought against the English general. His plan, founded on the necessity of retaining their hold both of Andalusia and Valencia as the great reservoirs of their resources, and the impossibility of doing so with effect while the centre of Spain was also occupied with insufficient forces, was, that Joseph himself should come to

95.

Able views of Soult at this period for the re-establishment of affairs.

Andalusia with all the troops he could collect, and so reinforce the army of Estremadura to such an extent as might enable it to resume the offensive in the Alentejo, and fix the seat of war in the Portuguese provinces on the left bank of the Tagus.* Impressed with these ideas, it was with the most poignant regret that this able commander received the formal order from the King, already mentioned, to evacuate Andalusia, and thus lose at once the fruit of three years' labours.¹

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¹ Nap. v. 89.
Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
60, 62. Belm.
i. 656.

"The southern provinces," he observed, "hitherto such a burden, now offer the means of remedying the present disasters. To sacrifice them, for the sake of regaining the capital of Spain, is folly; it is purchasing a town at the price of a kingdom. Philip V. thus lost it, and yet preserved his throne. The battle of the Arapeiles was merely a grand duel, which might be fought over again with a different result; but to abandon Andalusia, with all its stores and establishments, to raise the siege of Cadiz, sacrifice the guns, the equipments, the hospitals, and the magazines, and thus render null the labour of three years, would be to render the battle of the Arapeiles a prodigious historical event, which would be felt all over Europe, and even in the New World. Collect, then, the army of the centre, the army of Aragon, and, if possible, the army of Portugal, and march upon Andalusia, even if in so doing you should be obliged to evacuate Valencia. By doing this, a hundred and twenty thousand men will be assembled on the southern frontier of Portugal. If the army of Portugal remain on the north, let it do so: it can defend the line of the Ebro; and the moment eighty thousand men are assembled to the south of the Sierra Morena, the theatre of war is changed, and the English general must fall back to save Lisbon."²

96.
His remon-
strance
against the
evacuation of
Andalusia.

² Soult to
Joseph, Aug.
12, 1812.
Nap. v. 589,
Appendix.

Important and daring as these views for the main-

* "I see clearly the danger of your majesty's position; but any troops which I could send you would be insufficient to re-establish your affairs, unless the whole army of the south should march, which would occasion the loss of Andalusia, and, by necessary consequence, of Valencia. From one post to another, we should be driven to the Ebro. Now, all that might be avoided. We can by a single word from your majesty save six thousand sick and wounded, whom I shall be compelled to abandon, preserve two thousand pieces of cannon, the only reserve park that now remains in Spain, and abridge the war by at least six campaigns. I propose that your majesty should yourself come, with all the troops you can collect, to Andalusia; that will enable us to increase the army in Estremadura to such an extent as will fix the seat of war in the Portuguese provinces to the south of the Tagus."—SOULT to JOSEPH, 16th July 1812; BELMAS, i. 656.

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LXVIII.

1812.

97.
Refusal of
Suchet to
send any
succour to
Joseph.

tenance of French ascendancy in Spain undoubtedly were, they involved a sacrifice of the capital, the central provinces of the monarchy, and the communication with France, to which Joseph could by no means reconcile his mind. Nor, if he had adopted Soult's views, would it have been an easy matter to carry them into execution; for the army of Portugal was totally unable to undertake any such march as that from the Ebro to the Guadalquivir; the army of the centre, with its fearful train of dispossessed and starving courtiers, would be rather a burden than an assistance; and Suchet, with the army of Aragon, so far from being prepared to sacrifice his hard-won conquests in the east of Spain by following the King's standard into Andalusia, had positively refused to send him any succour, even to prevent his capital from falling into the enemy's hands.* The plan proposed by Suchet, that the retreat of the army of the centre should be upon Valencia, and that Soult with that of the south should be directed to fall back in the same direction, if less brilliant and daring, was more feasible and prudent than that of Soult.¹

¹ Nap. v. 591.
Belm. i. 657,
661.

98.
Soult is com-
pelled to
evacuate
Andalusia.

Aug. 14.

That marshal proposed that the whole centre of the Peninsula should be evacuated, and the French forces assembled in two masses on the Ebro and the Guadalquivir; and this plan had the great, and, in Joseph's estimation, decisive advantage, that it kept open the great lines of retreat and communication with France, both by the routes of Barcelona and Bayonne. Positive orders accordingly were transmitted to Soult to continue and complete the evacuation of Andalusia, and fall back with all his forces towards Valencia. The marshal, much against his will, obeyed these instructions, and the French troops in

* "I am well aware that the most formidable enemies which the Emperor now has in the Peninsula are the English, and see clearly the importance it would be, if I could send your majesty a corps of fifteen thousand or twenty thousand men; but when the impossibility of doing so is as clearly demonstrated as it is at this moment, I conceive it is my first duty to make you aware of the advantage of preserving our conquests in Valencia. They offer a point of retreat at once to the army of the centre and that of the south, and preserve the great line of communication with France by the eastern coast. Valencia is the true point of retreat: Wellington will never fight so far from his ships. His only object by his invasion is to reap the harvests of Leon, and induce your majesty to evacuate Andalusia. My first duty is to act according to the Emperor's instructions of 24th April: any detachment towards Madrid would compromise the fate of the provinces of Catalonia and Valencia. I see with extreme regret I have lost your Majesty's confidence, and pray you to give me a successor."—SUCHET to JOSEPH, June 30, 1812; BELMAS, i. 657, 661.

every quarter took the road for Murcia. But such were the feelings of exasperation excited on both sides by these calamities, and this immense abandonment of territory, that mutual and most acrimonious complaints were made on both sides to Napoleon—Joseph accusing Soult of disobedience of orders, and a design to make himself king of Andalusia ;* and Soult accusing Joseph to the French war minister of disloyalty to his brother, and forgetfulness of the Emperor's interests in the separate concerns of his own dominions.¹

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¹ Soult to the Duke de Feltre, Aug. 12, 1812. Nap. v. 591, and 236, 238.

When Wellington first moved into the plains of Leon, Hill received orders to remain on the defensive in Estremadura, and not fight with his opponent unless an opportunity should occur of doing so obviously to advantage. At this period it was Drouet's interest to have urged on a battle, as a serious loss in the south, even if consequent on a victory in the north, might have compelled Wellington to divide his forces, or even arrest his career of success. He advanced accordingly with twenty-four thousand men to Santa Martha, with the intention of attacking Hill's corps ; but the position at Albuera, now considerably strengthened by field-works, which the English general had assumed, was so formidable that he was deterred from the attempt, and retreated towards the Sierra Morena on the very day of the battle of Salamanca. A variety of affairs of outposts afterwards ensued between the two armies, in one of which Slade's brigade of horse gained a brilliant advantage over the French cavalry. Nothing of importance, however, ensued between the two armies, till the battle of Salamanca had imposed on Soult the necessity of withdrawing his troops altogether from Estre-

99.
Operations of
Hill in Estre-
madura.

July 24

* "I have yesterday received the letter in cipher which your Majesty wrote to me from Requena, on the 18th October. At the distance the Emperor is from his capital, there are some things on which we must shut our eyes, at least for the moment. If the conduct of the Duke of Dalmatia is equivocal and doubtful—if his proceedings have even the same aspect as those he formerly adopted when in Portugal, after the taking of Oporto—the time will come when the Emperor may punish him, if he deems it expedient : and perhaps he is less dangerous where he is than here, where a few factious persons, even from the depth of the prisons where they were confined, meditated and all but executed a revolution against the Emperor's authority, on the 2d and 3d October, (Malet's conspiracy.) I think then, sire, it is most prudent not to drive the Duke of Dalmatia to extremities ; taking care secretly, nevertheless, to thwart all his ambitious projects, and using every imaginable precaution to secure the fidelity of the army of the south towards the Emperor, and also that of the Spaniards in his suite." *Confidential Letter, the DUKE DE FELTRE, Minister-at-War, to KING JOSEPH ; Paris, 10th Nov. 1812 ; NAP. v. 595, App.*

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LXVIII.

1812.

1 Jones, ii.
115, 125.
Gurw. ix.
332, 333.

madura, preparatory to the general evacuation of the southern provinces; and then Hill followed Drouet on his retreat to the Sierra Morena, till he received orders from Wellington to advance up the Jurama towards Madrid, to cover the city on the southern side, while he himself, with the bulk of his forces, proceeded northward to the siege of Burgos.¹

100.
Wellington's
difficulties at
Madrid.

Wellington was not long, after he arrived at Madrid, of perceiving that the north was the quarter in which matters had become most urgent, and that it was there that the struggle for the maintenance of his position in the Peninsula was to be undergone. The expected co-operation on the east coast of Spain had, as already mentioned, entirely failed; Clausel had been considerably reinforced in the north; and Madrid had been very far indeed from realising the sanguine expectations which had been formed, as to the extent to which it might provide means for the campaign. A loan of £480,000 had indeed been asked from the city, and nominally agreed to; but such was the exhaustion of its resources, from the long previous impoverishment and the exaction of the French troops, that it produced very little.* The regency of Madrid could not be prevailed on to contribute any thing even for the subsistence of the troops; the military chest, so far as specie was concerned, was absolutely penniless; the war with America had, at the most critical period of the contest, closed the principal source from whence grain had hitherto been obtained for the army; and supplies could be procured only by purchasing corn for hard cash, and at a heavy expense, in Lisbon. The citizens had liberally fed the troops in garrison, and the stewards of the sequestered and royal lands had zealously given the produce of their harvest on the promise of future payment; but no steps whatever had been taken to augment the military strength of the country,² or turn the enthusiasm of the people to any useful

* Gurw. ix.
369, 371.
Jones, ii. 122.
Nap. v. 258,
260. Vict.
et Cong. xxi.
55.

* Such was the misery to which the poorer classes of Madrid had been reduced by the long-continued exactions of the French troops and authorities, that when the British arrived, so far from being in a condition to give them any support, they needed relief from them. Groans of famishing persons were, in the poorer quarters of the city, heard every night; while in the morning the numerous dead bodies thrown into the streets showed how intense the suffering had been; and the British officers of the third division and 45th regiment formed by their contributions a soup-kitchen, which rescued hundreds from an untimely death.—See NAPIER, v. 257, 258.

account: the guerillas were quietly settling down in the large towns, and striving to console themselves for their privations by the plunder they could collect; while the people of the capital, deeming the war at an end, were giving themselves up to feasts and bull-fights, without any thought of the serious concerns of their situation.

Thus the whole weight of the contest, as usual, was likely to fall on Wellington and his English troops; and as the north was the vital point of the campaign, and the considerable reinforcements which were coming from England had been directed to Corunna to join him on the Douro, he resolved without delay to direct a large part of his forces there, and proceed in person to endeavour to gain a base for the future operations of the war in the northern provinces. Leaving, therefore, at Madrid, the two divisions of the Allied army which stood most in need of repose, he himself with four divisions set out on the 1st September for Valladolid. Hill was ordered to Aranjuez to assist in covering the capital; the British and Portuguese from Cadiz were ordered round by sea to Lisbon, with instructions to move up as rapidly as possible to the scene of action; the Guards and reinforcements from England were directed to land at Corunna, and thence cross Galicia with all possible expedition; and every effort was made to bring together as great a disposable force as could be collected in the anticipated seat of war to the north of the Douro.¹

The march from Madrid was conducted with great expedition. Leaving that capital on the 1st September, the English general passed the Douro on the 6th, at the fords of El Herrera, and on the 7th drove the enemy from Valladolid; and, following them closely, effected a junction with the army of Galicia under Santocildes at Palencia. It was there seen how miserably fallacious had been the representations which had been held forth as to the support which might be anticipated from this portion of the Spanish troops. Instead of thirty thousand soldiers who received rations as soldiers in Galicia, there only joined the army twelve thousand men, ill-disciplined and almost in rags, of whom no more than three hundred and fifty were horse. It was quite evident, the moment they made their appearance, that no reliance could be placed on them

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101.

Wellington
moves against
Clausel in the
north.

Sept. 1.
1 Wellington
to Sir H.
Wellesley,
Aug. 23,
1812. Gurw.
ix. 369, 371.
Jones, ii. 122.
123. Nap. v.
258, 261.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 55.

102.

French retire
to Burgos.
Sept. 8.

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Sept. 17.

to withstand the shock of a single division of French troops. If, however, the appearance of the Spanish force was in the highest degree discouraging, that of the French troops was in a proportionate degree satisfactory to the English; and evinced in the clearest manner the vast chasm which the battle of Salamanca had made in their ranks. As Clausel retired, he broke down all the bridges over the numerous streams which in that mountainous region flow towards the Douro or the Ebro, the repairing of which sensibly retarded the advance of the British; but when he drew near to Burgos, and took up a position covering that town, which compelled the Allies to wait till the bulk of their army came up, it at once appeared how immensely his numbers had been diminished by that memorable engagement itself, and its effects. His battalions could be distinctly numbered; and the whole amount of his troops, including cavalry and artillery, did not exceed twenty-two thousand—a sad contrast to the noble army of forty-five thousand which had so lately crowded the banks of the Guarena.* With this force he did not conceive himself sufficiently strong to fight; and therefore, abandoning Burgos to its fate, he retired to Briviesca, on its northern side, where he was next day joined by General Souham with nine thousand infantry of the army of the north, which increased his force, even after deducting two thousand left in garrison in the castle of Burgos, to fully thirty thousand men.¹

¹ Belm. i.
238, 239.
Jones, ii. 124,
125. Vict. et
Conq. xxi. 64,
65. Gurw. ix.
419. Nap. v.
259, 261.

103.

Description
of the castle
of Burgos,
and the
French works
there.

The castle of BURGOS, which has acquired, from the consequences of the siege that followed, a historic character that would not otherwise have belonged to it, occupies the upper part of an oblong conical hill, the lower half of which is surrounded by an uncovered wall of difficult access, while on its summit stands an old square keep, converted by the French into a modern casemated fort. Between these defences, which they found there when they commenced their operations, the French engineers had constructed successive lines of field-works, well built and strongly palisaded, which enclosed the two summits of the hill, on the highest of which the

* “Clausel had collected twenty thousand infantry, two thousand horse, and fifty guns, with which he had reoccupied Valladolid previous to Wellington’s return from Madrid.”—BELMAS, i. 238; and CLAUSEL to JOSEPH, 18th August 1812, *Ibid.* p. 672; *Pièces Just.*

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old keep, surrounded by a powerful battery, stood, while the lower was crowned by an ancient building called the White Church, which also had been converted into a sort of modern fortress. The battery called the Napoleon battery, round the old keep, was so elevated that it commanded the whole country within cannon-shot around, with the exception of the reverse side of a hill called St Michael, which was a lower eminence, on which the French had constructed a hornwork, with a scarp twenty-five and a counterscarp ten feet high, encircled by strong palisades, and well furnished with heavy cannon. But its position under the fire of the Napoleon battery rendered it peculiarly difficult to hold it if won by assault. Twenty heavy guns and six mortars were already mounted in this fortress; and, independent of its importance, as commanding the great road from Bayonne to Madrid, its acquisition was an object of the very highest importance to the Allies, as the whole stores and reserve artillery of the army of Portugal were deposited within its walls; and its reduction, by depriving that force of its resources, would probably enable the English general to take up his winter quarters and fix the seat of war on the banks of the Ebro.¹

1 Jones, ii. 125, 126. Belm. iv. Nap. v. 262, 263. Wellington to Sir E. Paget. Sept. 20, 1812. Gurw. ix. 432 and 436. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 65, 66.

The first effort of the English general was directed against the hornwork of St Michael, the possession of which was indispensably necessary to commencing approaches against the body of the place. Such, however, was the vigour with which the French batteries—which commanded all the fords and bridges over the Arlanza stream, that required to be passed before it could be reached—were served, that it was not till the 19th that the passage was effected, and the outposts on the hill of St Michael driven in. An assault was immediately ordered for the same night, and conducted by Major Somers Cocks, with the light infantry of the first division, Pack's Portuguese, and the 42d British regiment. As soon as it was dark, the troops moved to the attack; and as the works, though formidable, were not yet entirely finished, they succeeded in forcing their way, headed by the 79th, in by the gorge, at daylight the next morning; although the attempt to carry the work itself failed, from the great height of the scarp.² The garrison, which consisted of a strong bat-

104.
Storming of the hornwork of St Michael
Sept. 19.

2 Vict. et Conq. xxi. 65, 66. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Sept. 21, 1812. Gurw. ix. 437. Jones, ii. 126, 127. Nap. v. 264.

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talion, made a stout resistance ; and when they found the entrance in the enemy's possession, collecting themselves into a solid mass, they overpowered all opposition, burst through the assailants, and regained the castle, with the loss only of a hundred and fifty men, while that of the assailants was above four hundred.

105.
Repeated
unsuccessful
assaults.

Sept. 28.

Batteries were now erected against the exterior line of defences, and Wellington had an opportunity of observing in person the strength of the place. Although the lines were far from being complete, and such as would easily have yielded to a very small battering train, yet, such was the almost total destitution of the British army in heavy artillery, that Wellington, from the very first, expressed the most serious apprehensions that he would not be able to breach its ramparts, and that his only chance of success consisted in the failure of the garrison's water, or in their magazine being set on fire.* The attempt, however, was made : twelve thousand men, comprehending the first and sixth divisions, with two Portuguese brigades, were intrusted with the siege ; while twenty thousand, supported by ten thousand Spaniards, formed the covering force. Approaches in form were accordingly commenced ; although the miserable battering train, which consisted only of three eighteen-pounders and the five iron twenty-four pounder howitzers which had been used at the siege of the forts of Salamanca, gave but little hope of a successful issue to the enterprise. An attempt was made, after the breaching guns had played a few days, to carry the outer wall by assault ; but although the troops got into the ditch, and the ladders were fixed against the scarp of the rampart, yet the few who reached its summit were immediately bayoneted, and after a bloody conflict of half an hour the assailants fell back, after having lost three hundred and fifty men.¹

¹ Belm. iv. 273, 279.
Jones, ii. 126.
Nap. ii. 266.
267. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 66.
67. Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Sept. 2, 1812.
Gurw. ix. 450.

All the attempts to breach the wall of this outer intrenchment by means of the heavy guns having failed, and two out of the three having been silenced by the

* " I am apprehensive that the means which I have are not sufficient to enable me to take the castle. I hear the enemy, however, are ill supplied with water, and that their magazines are in a place exposed to be set on fire : I think it possible, therefore, that I may have it in my power to force them to surrender, although I may not be able to lay the place open to assault."—WELLINGTON to LORD BATHURST, 21st Sept. 1812 ; GURWOOD, ix. 436.

superior weight of the enemy's fire, an attempt was made to run a mine in such a manner as to blow it down; while the single piece of ordnance which remained in a serviceable condition continued its ineffectual fire against the rampart. The gun could do nothing; but the mine, which was exploded on the night of the 29th, made a chasm in the wall, though not sufficiently wide as to be deemed practicable by the assaulting columns. Still a sergeant and four men, who formed the forlorn-hope, had gained its summit, but they were not supported, and before the next morning the garrison had, with surprising activity, run up such interior defences as rendered all entrance impossible. Recourse was now had to a second mine: a new gallery was run under the wall, and, at four in the afternoon of the 4th October, it was sprung with a terrific explosion, which at once sent many of the French up into the air, and brought down above one hundred feet of the wall. An assault was instantly ordered, both there and at the old breach, and both proved successful. Holmes, with the second battalion of the 24th, quickly forced his way through the smoke and crumbling ruins, almost before the rattle of the explosion had ceased; while Lieutenant Frazer of the same regiment at the same moment carried the old breach: and, both uniting, drove the enemy into their interior line. This important achievement greatly elevated the spirits of the army, which had sunk considerably from the long duration and serious loss of life during the siege; and the speedy reduction of the castle was anticipated, the more especially as some supplies of ammunition had already been received from Santander, and more were known to be on the road, both from Ciudad Rodrigo and Corunna.¹

But these promising appearances were of short continuance, and soon gave way to such a succession of disasters, as not only shut out almost all hope of a successful issue to the siege, but so seriously depressed the spirit of the army as went far to counterbalance all the advantages of the campaign. Dubreton and his brave garrison, who throughout the whole siege discharged with incomparable vigour and talent the important duty intrusted to them, made the most strenuous efforts to

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106.

Storming of
the outer
lines.
Sept. 29.

Oct. 4.

¹ Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
Oct. 5, 1812.
Gur. ix. 468.
Jones, ii. 127.
Nap. v. 273,
274. Belm.
iv. 281, 284.
Vict. et Conq.
xxi. 67, 68.

107.

Successful
sallies of the
garrison.

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Oct. 5.

Oct. 7 and 8.

dispossess the besiegers of the vantage-ground they had gained ; and, in the first instance, at least, with unlooked-for success. A sally, suddenly directed, on the afternoon of the next day, against the advanced posts of the British within the outer wall, swept them all back and regained both breaches ; and though the garrison was driven in again the same evening, yet they had in the mean time destroyed this lodgement, and carried off the tools. The two following days were employed by both parties in indefatigable efforts : the Allies increasing the front of their lodgement, and pushing their sap up to the second line ; the French, by frequent sorties and an incessant fire, as well as by rolling shells down the hill, striving to retard them. On the evening of the 8th, however, the head of the sap had, by strenuous exertions, been run to within ten yards of the wall ; and Dubreton, seeing an assault of that line imminent, ordered a sally in the night, which succeeded so far, that by a desperate rush the trench was gained, and before the enemy could be driven in again,—which was effected with the utmost gallantry by Major Cocks, who fell dead in the moment of success,—the whole works, constructed with so much labour between the outer and inner line, were destroyed.¹

It was now evident that to push the sap on so narrow a front, without the aid of artillery, was hopeless ; and every effort was therefore made to increase the fire on the inner line. The arrival of ammunition from Santander enabled the engineers to do this. The one remaining gun was worked incessantly ; and the five iron howitzers did such good service, that it was evident that if an adequate supply of ammunition could be obtained, the place would speedily fall. But the failure of that indispensable article again suspended the operations, and it was not till the 15th that the fire in the breaching batteries could be renewed. It was then directed against the inner circle of the Napoleon battery, while a mine, charged with nine hundred pounds of powder, was run under the White Church. This done, and the howitzers having cleared away the temporary obstructions run up in the breach of the second line, a final assault was ordered for the night of the 18th. At half-past four in the morning, the signal was given by the springing of the mine beneath the White

¹ Jones, ii.
128. Gurw.
ix. 478. Nap.
v. 274, 275.
Belm. iv. 236,
290. Vict. et
Cong. xxi.
68, 69.

108.
Increasing
difficulties of
the besiegers
from want of
artillery.

Oct. 15.

Oct. 17.

Oct. 18.

Church, which threw down a part of the wall; and Colonel Browne, at the head of a Portuguese battalion and some Spanish companies, after a violent struggle, established themselves in its ruins. At the same time, a detachment of the King's German Legion carried the breach of the second line; the Guards, at another place, got in by escalade; and the intrenchment was won. Some brave men, in the tumult of victory, even rushed on and got to the summit of the breach of the third line, where the bodies of Major Wurmb and a Hanoverian colonel were found. Unfortunately, however, the efforts of these heroes were, in the darkness of the night, not adequately supported: the troops got dispersed in the space between the second and third line; and Dubreton, who had a powerful reserve in readiness to take advantage of such an incident, instantly rushed down with an overpowering force, and drove the assailants out of the lines they had so gallantly won, with the loss of two hundred men.¹

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¹ Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Oct. 26, 1812. Gurw. ix. 508, 509. Jones, ii. 123, 129. Nap. v. 277, 279. Belm. iv. 291, 295. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 70, 71.

This was the last effort of the besiegers. The siege, which had now continued without intermission for thirty days, had not only occasioned a vast consumption of ammunition to the Allies, which they could ill spare in the exhausted state of their supplies, but it had cost them two thousand brave men killed and wounded, and given the French generals time to assemble forces from all quarters for its relief. Souham's corps at Briviesca had been joined by the whole army of the north, and strong reinforcements from Alava; in consequence of which Clausel, whose force was now raised to forty-four thousand men, had assumed an offensive attitude, which had obliged Wellington to unite nearly the whole besieging to the covering army, on the day of the last assault. He had even driven in the British pickets, and obtained possession of Quintana Palla on their left, though from this his men were immediately expelled by Sir Edward Paget with two divisions. Accounts, however, were at the same time received from Madrid, which rendered it indispensable for the Allies forthwith to provide for the security of the centre of Spain.² Soult, who had without molestation assembled his whole forces in Andalusia, including Drouet's from Estremadura, had marched from Granada

^{109.} Wellington raises the siege. Causes of its failure.

² Jones's Sieges, ii 130, 131. Gurw. ix. 508. Belm. i. 236. Nap. v. 238, 290.

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Sept. 15.
Sept. 29.

in the middle of September, by the way of Caravaca, and effected his junction with the army of the centre, under Joseph, on the 29th of the same month, at Albante. Their united force was sixty thousand strong, without reckoning on any of Suchet's troops.

110.

Inactivity of
Ballasteros,
and his pro-
clamation
against Wel-
lington.
Sept. 12.

Ballasteros, whose indefatigable activity and energy had hitherto procured for him a high reputation, was so mortified at being directed by the Cortes to act in obedience to the directions of Wellington, that at this critical period he not only hung back, and kept his important force in a state of inactivity, but actually published a proclamation to his troops, appealing to the Spanish pride against the indignity of serving under a foreigner; a proceeding for which the government of Cadiz most justly deprived him of his command, and confined him in the fortress of Ceuta. But, meanwhile, the evil was done, and was irreparable: the whole army of the south had united with that of the centre, and was advancing rapidly against Madrid sixty thousand strong; while the reinforced army of the north, mustering forty-five thousand soldiers, pressed on Wellington on the northern side. Thus, as usual, the whole weight of the contest had fallen upon the British general, whose united force, after the losses and sickness of the campaign, being little more than half the number of the enemy's armies directed against them, a retreat to a central position became a matter of necessity. Accordingly the siege of the castle of Burgos was raised on the night of the 21st, not without severe regret on the part of the English general.¹

¹ Jones, ii.
130, 131.
Nap. v. 288,
291. Gurw.
ix. 508, 509.
Wellington
to Lord
Bathurst,
Oct. 26, 1812.
Belm. i. 239,
240. Vict. et
Conq. xxi. 70,
73.

111.

Operations of
Soult and
Hill in the
centre of
Spain.

Soult's first operations were directed against the castle of Chinchilla, a fort of great strength situated on a high rock at the point of junction of the roads of Alicante and Valencia, and commanding the only route from the eastern provinces to the capital. It was garrisoned by two hundred and forty men, and, from its inaccessible situation, was wellnigh impregnable. Wellington had calculated upon the siege of this fort retarding the advance of the French from the south a considerable time: and Ballasteros was to have united with the whole guerilla parties from the southern provinces, who would have formed a mass of above twenty thousand combatants, and,

united to thirty thousand Anglo-Portuguese under Hill at Toledo, might have seriously retarded, if they could not altogether prevent, the march of Soult and Joseph to the capital. But Ballasteros' disobedience of the orders he had received, enabled Soult, without molestation, not only to assemble his forces, but to continue his march with such rapidity, that he appeared before this fort on the 3d of October; and the castle being immediately invested, it surrendered on the 6th, in consequence of the singular circumstance of lightning having fallen on the garrison, killing the governor and eight men, and wounding a still greater number; whereupon the remainder, seized with superstitious dread, immediately hoisted the white flag. By this fortunate catastrophe, coupled with the no less auspicious disobedience of Ballasteros, Soult was enabled to bring his whole force, in conjunction with that of Joseph, in all sixty thousand men, to bear against the centre of Spain, where Hill, now reinforced by the troops from Cadiz, with an army not at the utmost exceeding forty thousand, of whom part were Spaniards, was intrusted with the defence of the capital.¹

In these circumstances it became a matter of necessity to abandon Madrid, and nothing, it was evident, short of a union of the whole British force in the Peninsula, in a central situation on the plains of Leon, could afford them any chance of maintaining their footing in Spain. Wellington then experienced the truth of what he had long before expressed in his correspondence, viz., that the invasion of Andalusia and the siege of Cadiz, by retaining a large portion of the French force in a state of comparative inactivity, so far as resisting the British army was concerned, had been a sensible benefit to the Allied cause; and that the battle of Salamanca, by inverting this order and bringing their masses concentrated together, from the mountains of Asturias to the bay of Cadiz, upon the British host, would, in the first instance at least, prove a disadvantage. He transmitted orders to Hill accordingly to abandon the line of the Tagus, which he had hitherto held, evacuate Madrid, and fall back by the Guadarama pass to the neighbourhood of Salamanca. These directions were immediately obeyed; the preparations for the defence of the line of the Tagus were discontinued;²

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Oct. 6.

Oct. 6.

¹ Jones, ii.

131, 132.

Nap. v. 291,

292. Vict. et

Conq. xxi.

83, 84. Belm.

i. 241. Nap.

v. 308, 309.

112.

The latter evacuates Madrid, and retires towards Salamanca.

Nov. 2.

² Wellington

to Lord

Bathurst,

Oct. 28, 1812.

Gurw. ix.

515, 516.

Jones, ii. 132,

Belm. i. 241,

Nap. v. 310,

314.

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Madrid was evacuated, amidst the frequent tears and mournful silence of the inhabitants ; a dense mass of men, women, and children, followed the troops for miles bewailing their departure. On the same day Joseph made his entry, and the British army, at first in good order, took the road for the Guadarama pass.

113.
Great difficulties of Wellington's retreat.

Oct. 21.

1 Gurw. ix.
511, 512.
Nap. v. 295,
296. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
76.

Meanwhile, Wellington himself had extraordinary hardships to encounter in his retreat from Burgos. No small difficulty was experienced at the very outset in getting the troops across the bridge of the Arlanza ; for it was commanded by the castle, and the enemy, aware of the intentions of the besiegers, had brought every gun they possibly could to bear on the narrow archway. Such, however, were the precautions taken by the British engineers to prevent the carriages passing from making any noise, as the French had done twelve years before at the siege of the Fort of Bard in the valley of Aosta,* that the whole would have got over during the night in safety, had not some irregular Spanish horse heedlessly galloped past, and, by their ill-timed clatter, attracted the attention of the garrison, who instantly commenced a heavy fire on the bridge, then crowded with carriages. It at first was very destructive ; but the aim was soon lost as the guns recoiled, and the remaining discharges, which continued through the whole night, did little or no mischief. This night-march, which, from its extraordinary difficulty and boldness, had never been anticipated by the French generals, gave Wellington a full day's journey in advance of them, and the French cavalry did not overtake the Allies in any force till the forenoon of the 23d.¹

114.
Gallant conduct of the rearguard on the retreat.
Oct. 23.

Several sharp affairs between the horse on either side then took place. In particular, at the passage of the Hormaza, General Anson's brigade twice charged the head of the pursuers as they forded, and for three hours checked the pursuit. A more serious action took place near Venta de Pozo, when the French cavalry, who had at length forced the passage, and were hotly pursuing Anson's horsemen, who were retiring in disorder, were received by two battalions of the King's German Legion drawn up in square. The imperial cavalry came on with their wonted gallantry and loud shouts, but they were

* *Ante*, Chap. xxxi. § 72.

unable to retaliate upon the Germans the disaster of the 23d June :* the steady squares received them with a rolling volley ; and after several ineffectual charges, in the course of which they sustained a severe loss, the French squadrons were obliged to withdraw, and the retreat on that day was continued without any farther molestation. The army, retiring in two columns, crossed the Pisuerga, and headquarters were fixed for the night at Cordovilla. Much disorder prevailed there during the night, in consequence of the soldiers, whose discipline had become relaxed from the very commencement of the retreat, breaking into the subterranean vaults in that vicinity, where the wine of the vintage was stored. The effects of intemperance generally appeared when the troops began to move next morning ; but luckily the enemy was not aware of the circumstance, and the retreat of twenty miles was conducted that day without molestation as far as Duenas, across the Carrion, where the Guards, who had disembarked at Corunna, joined the army nearly on the spot where Sir John Moore had commenced his forward movement against Soult four years before.¹

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Oct. 24.

1 Wellington to Lord Bathurst, Oct. 26, 1812. Gurw. ix. 511, 512. Beamish, ii. 111, 116. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 76, 77. Nap. v. 295, 298.

It had now become evident that the French cavalry, nearly double that of the Allies, and fresh from cantonments, while the British and Portuguese were exhausted by the fatigues of a long campaign, could hardly be opposed with success in the open field. The utmost vigilance, therefore, was requisite in conducting a long march, in presence of an enemy so superior in numbers generally, and especially predominant in that arm, so essential during a retreat. The troops, accordingly, were rested a day behind the Carrion, to recruit their strength and give time for concentration ; the whole bridges over that river were mined for explosion, and on the day following the retreat was continued towards the Douro. Unfortunately, however, the bridges of Palencia over the Carrion had not been occupied in sufficient strength, and Foy drove out the troops who held the town, and gained the bridges before the explosion took place. A ford was also dexterously discovered by the enemy near Villamuriel, while the bridge over the Pisuerga at Tariejo was

115.
Continuance of the retreat across the Carrion, and actions there.

Oct. 25.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxviii. §§ 82, 83.

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prematurely fired, and failed in its effect, so that the French horsemen galloped over and made the party in possession of the town prisoners. These untoward events destroyed the strength of Wellington's position, for over the bridges thus won the enemy could pour in any numbers they chose; and the left was accordingly thrown back, which had been hotly engaged nearly the whole day. At length the English general, seeing that the enemy's progress in that quarter seriously endangered the whole army, repaired to the spot, and ordered an offensive movement to drive the French back again over the river. Those who had crossed the ford at Villamuriel were immediately attacked by two brigades under Major-General Oswald's orders, and driven across the Carrion with considerable loss, though the Allies suffered severely, and Alava was wounded while heading the Spanish infantry in the pursuit.¹

¹ Jones, ii.
134, 136.
Nap. v. 301,
304. Gurw.
ix. 512. Vict.
et Conq. xxi.
78, 79. Belm.
i. 242.

116.
Junction of
Wellington
and Hill near
Salamanca.

Oct. 29.

After this check, the army retired sixteen miles on the following day without molestation to Cabezon, on the Pisuergera; and, as the ground on the southern bank of the river is very strong, and the approach to the bridge difficult, the troops were halted for two days there, while the destruction of the bridge at Tordesillas equally prevented their progress in that direction. On the 29th, the bridges at Cabezon and Valladolid were both blown up, and the army retreated across the Douro, the whole bridges over which were destroyed. The French, however, having got a body of horse across by swimming, immediately commenced repairing the bridge at Tordesillas; upon which the British were moved in strength to that point, and immediately began establishing batteries, which stopped the advance of the enemy in that quarter. Souham made no farther attempt to continue the pursuit beyond the Douro at this time, as he was unwilling to hazard a general engagement till the approach of Joseph and Soult enabled him to do so with a decided superiority. Thus the British remained unmolested behind its broad stream till the 6th of November, when the bridges both at Toro and Tordesillas having been restored, and the near approach of Soult, with an overwhelming force from the south, rendering the line of the Douro no longer tenable, the retreat was resumed.² On the 8th the army

Nov. 6.

Nov. 8.
² Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
78, 83. Jones,
ii. 135, 137.
Nap. v. 302,
304. Gurw.
ix. 512, 516.

effected its junction with Hill's corps, and both united, took up a position at Alba de Tormes and San Christoval, on the ground which the army had twice occupied before, and which was hallowed by the recollection of the glorious victory of which it had been the theatre.

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While the British, who possessed the advantage of an interior line of communication, were thus concentrating their forces in front of Salamanca, Soult was following Hill's corps with all the expedition in his power, and stretching out his light troops to the northward, in order to feel for the corps of Souham, which was descending from the Douro. On the 6th, his headquarters were at Arcolo, and on the day following the advanced posts of the two armies entered into communication by Medina del Campo. The main bodies were not long in effecting a junction; and on the 10th the united force advanced towards the British post at Alba de Tormes. General Hamilton, with a brigade of Portuguese, held the castle at that place, round which some field-works had been hastily constructed; and though Soult battered it with eighteen pieces of artillery, to which the Allies had only four guns to reply, yet their fire of musketry was kept up with such vigour that the enemy did not venture upon an assault, but sought for and found a ford higher up on the Tormes, at Galisancho. On the following day the whole French army passed over, and took post in a strong position near Mozarbes, from whence detachments of their numerous cavalry threatened the communications of the British with Ciudad Rodrigo. The force now at the disposal of the French marshals was very formidable, amounting to no less than ninety-five thousand men, of whom twelve thousand were superb cavalry, with a hundred and twenty pieces of cannon.^{1*}

117.
And of Soult
and Souham.

Nov. 7.

Nov. 10.

¹ Jones, ii.
139, 140.
Nap. v. 319,
321. Viet. et
Conq. xxi.
85, 86. Belm.
i. 241, 242.
Gurw. ix.
520, 542, 552.

To oppose this immense force, Wellington had fifty-two thousand British and Portuguese, including four thousand horse, eighty-nine guns, and fourteen thousand Spaniards; but on the last little reliance could be placed in a regular engagement. With so great an inferiority, it was impossible for the English general to attack the French on the strong ground which they themselves had selected; but

118.
Wellington
offers battle,
which is
refused.

* "The three united armies mustered ninety-five thousand combatants."—BELMAS, i. 242.

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1812.

he offered battle on his own ground, and for this purpose withdrew to the famous position of Arapeiles. The sight of that memorable field strongly excited the soldiers of both armies; the French, conscious of their superiority in number, demanded with loud cries to be led to the combat, hoping to wash out the recollection of their former defeat on the very spot on which it had been sustained. The sight of the ground, still blanched by the skeletons of their countrymen, and strewn with fragments of casques and cuirasses, excited in the highest degree their warlike enthusiasm. The British, nothing doubtful of the result of a second battle of Salamanca, clustered in great strength on the two Arapeiles, and the ridge of Ariba, yet moist with the blood of their heroic comrades; and gazing with stern resolve on the interminable masses of the enemy, panted for the thrilling moment which was to bring to a decisive issue their long-protracted contest. The opinions of the French generals, however, were divided as to the course which should be pursued. Jourdan, whose martial fire age had not extinguished, was eager to fight immediately; and for this purpose proposed to bear down at once on the Allies, and hazard all on the issue of a single battle. Soult, on the other hand, better instructed in the character of the troops with whom he had to deal, hesitated to attack them where they stood, and instead, moved a considerable part of his force to the left, so as to menace the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo, much as Marmont had done, but on a wider circle, so as to be beyond the reach of the falcon swoop which had proved so fatal to his predecessor.¹

¹ Belm. i.
242. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
87, 88, Jones,
ii. 140.
Gurw. ix.
552, 553.

119.
He retreats
to Ciudad
Rodrigo.
Nov. 15.

Wellington, knowing that the immense superiority of the enemy, especially in cavalry, rendered it an easy matter for them to outflank his position, and disturb his communications, took the resolution, as they would not fight, to retreat: already the baggage had defiled through Salamanca, and at three o'clock in the afternoon several loud explosions in the British rear announced to both armies that the movement had commenced. The operation, however, was a very hazardous one; for, in performing it, the Allied army, defiling almost within cannon-shot of the enemy, presented their flank, several miles in length, to his attack; and a daring general had the same

opportunity for a brilliant stroke which had been presented to Wellington by Marmont, on the same ground, four months before. Possibly the extreme ardour of the French soldiers might, notwithstanding the prudence of their leader, have brought on a general action; but in that decisive moment the star of England prevailed. A violent storm of rain, accompanied by a thick mist, came on, which for two hours rendered it impossible to see any object more than a few yards ahead; and during this interval of darkness, the whole British army moved safely past the dangerous ground, in three columns, having the advantage of moving on the high-roads, while the enemy could only attack by cross lanes, now almost impassable from wet. A few cavalry alone followed the Allies, and made two hundred prisoners; and the single trophy which the enemy could show from a crisis which might have changed the fate of Spain and the world, was the English second in command, Sir Edward Paget, who accidentally fell on the day following into the hands of a small party of horse, while riding unattended from one column to the other, during the darkness of a severe storm.¹

¹ Vict.
Conq. xxi.
86, 89. Belm
i. 242, 243.
Jones, ii. 140.
Nap. v. 328,
330. Gurw.
ix. 552, 553.

The retreat from the Arapeiles to Ciudad Rodrigo lasted but three days, and it was only disturbed by the cavalry of the French, almost all their infantry and guns having halted at Salamanca. Nevertheless the distress of the troops for the most part was great, the disorders frightful, and the loss sustained very considerable. During the whole march the weather was to the last degree inclement; storms of wind and rain succeeded each other with hardly any intermission; and the spirit of the soldiers, already weakened by the long continuance and severe fatigues of the retreat, sank in an extraordinary degree, and precipitated them into general confusion and insubordination. The roads were so broken up that it was with the utmost difficulty that the guns and baggage-waggons could be dragged through; the supplies, especially of Sir R. Hill's corps, almost totally failed, from the troops having been thrown off their former communications without gaining any new ones; and the soldiers, compelled to straggle in quest of subsistence, fell into the usual disorders of a disorganised army. Many yielded to the

120.
Extraordi-
nary hard-
ships and
losses of the
retreat.

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Nov. 16.

¹ Jones, ii. 140.
Nap. v. 334,
335. Belm. i.
243.

unbounded passion for intoxication which breaks out in all men during severe distress, but has in every age been in a peculiar manner the disgrace of the English people. On the 16th the march of the army was through a continued forest, where vast quantities of swine were feeding under the trees; the soldiers immediately dispersed to shoot the game thus presented to their hand; and such a rolling of musketry was heard through the woods, that Wellington at first thought the enemy were upon them.¹

121.
Ciudad Rod-
rigo is at
length reach-
ed in great
distress.

A sharp skirmish took place as the rearguard of the army was descending the steep slope which leads from the high table-land covered with the forest to the Huebra stream, which however was passed with very little loss. A deviation from orders on the part of some of the officers in direction of columns, had soon after wellnigh occasioned a serious loss, by taking the men to a place where the road, though more direct, was crossed by the river in an impassable state of flood. From this dilemma they were only extricated by being led back by Wellington in person, happily without the enemy's knowledge, to the ford which he had originally assigned; and on the 17th the weather was so dreadful, and the privations of the troops so excessive, that most serious disasters might be anticipated if the retreat were conducted farther in such calamitous circumstances. Happily, as this was the worst day of their suffering, so it was the last: Soult, whose troops were suffering nearly as much as those of the Allies, was compelled by utter starvation to discontinue the pursuit at the Huebra; a few squadrons only followed to the Tamañes; on the 18th the weather cleared up; provisions in plenty were obtained from the magazines at Ciudad Rodrigo, and liberally served out to the famishing troops; and the wearied men, finding fuel and dry bivouacs on the sandy hills near that fortress, forgot their fatigues around the blazing watchfires, and after six months' incessant toils and dangers, sank into the enjoyment of undisturbed repose.²

Nov. 17.

Nov. 18.

² Nap. v. 334,
335. Jones,
ii. 140, 141.
Vict. et Cong.
xxi. 88, 89.
Belm. i. 243.
Gurw. ix.
554, 555.

Both parties were now thoroughly exhausted with their fatigues, and not only rest, but a separation on either side in quest of subsistence, had become indispensable. If Soult had remained with all his forces together for a week longer, one-half of his soldiers, and probably all his horses,

would have perished of actual famine; and if Wellington's retreat in similar storms had continued a few days more, his army would have been wellnigh dissolved. Both the French and the English commanders accordingly put their troops into winter quarters, and the vast arrays which had so recently crowded the banks of the Tormes were dispersed over a wide extent of surface. The British went into cantonments on the Coa and the Agueda; the left being thrown back to Lamego, and the right advanced so far forward as to hold the pass of Bejar. Headquarters were again established at Frenada. Soult's noble army was entirely dislocated; his own headquarters were established at Toledo in La Mancha; Joseph returned with his guards to Madrid; and the bulk of the force was cantoned in Old and New Castile, between the Douro and the Tagus, Salamanca being occupied in strength by two divisions. But the ground lost in the campaign was never again recovered; Asturias and Estremadura remained in the undisturbed possession of the Spaniards; the imperial standards never again crossed the Sierra Morena; and Andalusia, Murcia, and Granada were for ever delivered from the oppression of the invader.¹

The losses sustained by the British and Portuguese during this retreat, by casualties or prisoners in the field, did not exceed fifteen hundred men; but the stragglers who fell into the enemy's hands were much more numerous, and the prisoners taken in this way exceeded three thousand. Altogether, from the time that the siege of Burgos was abandoned, the army had been weakened by the loss of nearly seven thousand men. The insubordination of the troops, and the frightful habits of intemperance to which in many cases they surrendered themselves, were the main causes of this serious diminution; for the retreat had been conducted with extraordinary skill; the men of both armies had retired above two hundred miles, in presence of greatly superior forces, without a single battalion being broken, or a gun or standard taken. No stores, treasure, or provisions, had been destroyed; none of the sick and wounded abandoned; no night marches, with the exception of that under the cannon of the castle of Burgoſ, had taken place; the journeys gone over during the day had been far from excessive, and till the last three

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

122.

Both armies
are put into
winter quar-
ters.

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
85, 90. Belm.
i. 243. Jones,
ii. 141. Nap.
v. 337, 340.

123.

Losses of the
retreat, and
severe ad-
dress of Wel-
lington to his
troops.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Gurw. ix. 575. Wellington to generals of division, Nov. 28, 1812. Jones, ii. 141. Scherer, ii. 209. Jackson, ii. 247.

days, when the extraordinary throng had occasioned a deficiency in the supplies, no want of provisions had been experienced by the troops. When, notwithstanding these circumstances, it was still found that the loss from the defalcation of marauders and the capture of drunkards had been so serious, and that the discipline of the army had been relaxed to a great degree during the retreat, Wellington deemed it indispensable to make a great effort to recall all ranks to a sense of their duty; and for this purpose addressed a severe letter of admonition to the officers commanding divisions and brigades, complaining in an especial manner of the habitual inattention of regimental officers to their various duties, in so far as the subordination, discipline, and comforts of the troops were concerned.¹*

124.
Effect it produced on the army.

Never was a document published by a British commander which produced a stronger sensation, or gave rise to more vehement feelings, than this celebrated address. That the complaints were in great part well founded, and that every one's recollection could afford ample confirmation of the material facts stated, was indeed certain; but still the necessity of publishing them to the army, and consequently, by the English newspapers, to all Europe, was not equally apparent. Even if it had been necessary, it was urged that some allowance should have been made for men who had been engaged for nearly eleven months in constant sieges, marches, or battles; and whose efforts, during that period, had delivered half of the Peninsula, and drawn upon them the enemy's military force from the whole of Spain.²

² Nap. v. 357, Jones, ii. 143.

* "The army has met with no disaster; it has suffered no privations which but trifling attention on the part of the officers could not have prevented; it has suffered no hardships excepting those resulting from the necessity of being exposed to the inclemencies of the weather at a time when they were most severe. The necessity for retreat existing, none was ever made on which the troops made such short marches; none on which they made such long and repeated halts; and none on which the retreating armies were so little pressed on their rear by the enemy. Yet, from the moment the troops commenced their retreat from the neighbourhood of Madrid on the one hand, and Burgos on the other, the officers lost all command over the men. Irregularities and outrages of all descriptions were committed with impunity, and losses have been sustained which ought never to have been incurred. The discipline of every army, after a long and active campaign, becomes in some degrees relaxed; but I am concerned to observe, that the army under my command has fallen off in this respect in the late campaign to a greater degree than any army with which I have ever been, or of which I have ever read."—WELLINGTON to *Officers commanding Divisions and Brigades*, ix. 574, 575.

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

125.

Particulars
in which the
proclama-
tion was
unduly
severe.

The reproaches, too, though generally well founded, were not applicable to some corps, particularly the light division and Foot Guards, who had joined from Corunna, and who had conducted their retreat in admirable order; and Wellington was not aware that his own well-conceived arrangements for the supply of provisions to his troops had been, in many cases, rendered totally nugatory, from the impossibility of getting the means of transport for the stores, or the negligence of inferior functionaries in carrying his orders into execution. In some cases, when he supposed the men were getting three rations a-day regularly served out, they were in fact living on acorns which they picked up, or swine which they shot in the woods. For these reasons, the reproof was, not without foundation, complained of as unjust by many; but there can be no doubt that, to the great body of the troops, the justice of the remarks was what rendered them so unpalatable; and that the cogency of the maxim,—“the greater the truth, the greater the libel,” never was more signally evinced than on this occasion. As usual after such admonitions, however, the reproof, though universally complained of, in the end produced salutary effects. The officers loudly declaimed against the injustice with which they had been treated, but quietly set about remedying the disorders which they were well aware had crept into the service; vast improvements were effected in the organisation and arrangements of the troops before the next campaign; and all admitted that it was in a great degree to their beneficial effect that the triumphs of Vittoria and the Pyrenees were to be ascribed.¹

¹ Nap. v. 357,
359. Jones,
ii. 143. Jack-
son, ii. 217.

While this surprising campaign was going on in the centre and north of Spain, the operations in the south and on the east coast, though not equally brilliant, sustained the character of the British arms, and, in their ultimate effects, were attended with important results in the deliverance of the Peninsula. It has been already noticed* how much Wellington found his operations impeded, immediately before the battle of Salamanca, by the project of Lord William Bentinck to commence his grand diversion on the Italian shores, thereby reducing

126.

Operations in
the south and
east of Spain.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxviii. § 63.

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1812.

July 20.

July 31.

Aug. 7.

July 21.

¹ Jones, ii.
121. Nap. v.
214, 230.
Tor. v. 111,
112.

the British expedition destined to act on the east of Spain to six thousand men. Such as it was, however, this armament produced a very considerable impression, and clearly proved of what importance, on the general issue of the campaign, the operations in that quarter, if more vigorously conducted and with a larger force, might have been. General Maitland, who commanded this force, arrived at Port Mahon in Minorca, in the middle of July, and at first stood across for the coast of Catalonia, with a view, if possible, to attempt a *coup-de-main* against Tarragona. Finding, however, though preparations for a considerable rising in that quarter had been made, there was no Spanish force in existence capable of keeping the field as a regular army, and that they could only bring eight thousand Somatenes into the field, while the French had thirteen thousand disposable men in the province, besides Suchet's force, of a still greater amount, in Valencia, he wisely judged that it would be hopeless to make an effort in that province, and therefore made for Alicante, where a strong fortress, still in the hands of the Murcians, offered a secure base for his operations. There, accordingly, he landed, in the beginning of August; and his arrival was most opportune and beneficial to the common cause, as it saved that fortress, which was menaced with a siege, in consequence of the defeat of General O'Donnell. That general, with the last reserves of the Murcians, six thousand strong, had been totally routed by a division of Suchet's army under Harispe, only ten days before, at the mouth of the pass of Castalla, and was now wholly unable to keep the field.¹

127.
Landing of
the British
forces at Ali-
cante, and
difficulties
they expe-
rienced.

Maitland's forces were all disembarked at Alicante by the 11th August; but, although he found himself in communication with a body of Spaniards considerable in point of numerical amount, yet no reliance could be placed upon them for operations in the field; and he was soon overwhelmed by the innumerable crosses, jealousies, and vexations, to which every British commander throughout the war, without exception, was subjected, who attempted to combine operations with the Peninsular troops, and which the iron will and invincible perseverance of Wellington alone had been able to overcome. The governor of Alicante, in the first instance,

refused to give him possession of that fortress, and only a limited number of men were permitted to remain within its walls; of the British soldiers only three thousand were English or German, who could be relied on for the real shock, the remainder being Mediterranean mercenaries, whose steadiness in action was untried and doubtful; and the moment operations in the field were proposed, such extraordinary difficulties as to providing subsistence and the means of transport were thrown in the way by the Spanish authorities and commanders, that Maitland abandoned the attempt in despair, and not long after, under the combined influence of bad health and disgust, resigned his command. At the same time twelve hundred men, under General, afterwards Sir Rufane Donkin, disembarked at Denia, on the east of Alicante; but they were speedily assailed by superior forces, and forced to betake themselves to their ships. He was succeeded by General Mackenzie, who held the command only for a few weeks, when he was superseded by General Clinton; but he too was paralysed by the difficulties with which he was surrounded; and though on the 22d November the citadel of Alicante was surrendered to the keeping of the British, still no offensive movement worth noticing was attempted. General Campbell came next with four thousand fresh troops from Sicily; but the season for active operations had now passed, and the winter was spent in strenuous efforts to put the army on a more efficient footing. It was fortunate that at this period Suchet was so far deceived by the habitual exaggerations of the Spaniards, that he attempted nothing, believing that the Allies had fifty thousand men in his front. Thus this expedition, though it did nothing else, yet produced the important effect of detaining his whole force in that part of Spain, and preventing any portion of it from joining the mass which was concentrating from all other quarters against Wellington in the plains of Old Castile.¹

Oct. 5.

Nov. 22.

¹ Belmi. i.
244. Nap. v.
341, 349.
Tor. v. 112,
114. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
97, 103.

Though the war in Catalonia and the Asturias was not distinguished by any brilliant events during this campaign, yet the Spaniards were in both slowly regaining the ascendancy. The weight of the English army, though distant, operated with sensible effect in both these provinces, and by compelling the French to concentrate their

128.
Operations in
Catalonia

CHAP.
LXVIII.
1812.

July 29.

Oct. 19.

¹ Belm. i.
246. Tor. v.
86, 87. Nap.
v. 341, 342.

129.
And in the
Asturias.
June 20.

July 6.

Aug. 15.

forces to succour menaced points, or await contingent events, allowed the inhabitants to wrest from them several important posts. In spring, Montserrat was abandoned by the invaders, and immediately occupied by Colonel Green, who, with some Spanish bands, again fortified that important stronghold. Decaen and Maurice Mathieu collected their forces, and in the end of July drove the Spaniards a second time from it; but, instead of retaining their conquest, they set fire to the buildings, and the flames of the monastery told all the inhabitants of the adjoining plains that the holy mountain was no longer polluted by the presence of the spoiler. The bands of Lacy, D'Erolles, Rovira, and Milans, however, kept undisputed possession of the whole mountain ranges with which the country abounded: the power of the French extended only over the fortresses which they held, and the plains in their immediate vicinity; and so precarious was their authority in more remote quarters that eight thousand men were required to keep open the communication between Gerona, Barcelona, and Tarragona.¹

In Asturias, an English squadron, commanded by Sir Home Popham, appeared in the end of June on the coast, and did excellent service by keeping the French posts in a state of constant alarm, so as to prevent Caffarelli from detaching any considerable force to the aid of Marmont previous to the battle of Salamanca. Castro Urdiales, a strong fort on the sea-coast, was taken in the beginning of July, which enabled the squadron to communicate freely with the insurgents in the interior; and although several attempts on Santander, Guetario, and Bilboa failed, from the strong fortifications with which the French had established themselves in these towns, yet they were all evacuated and fell into the hands of the Spaniards on occasion of the general concentration of the French forces in the northern provinces, which followed the disaster of Salamanca. Bilboa, indeed, was reoccupied by Caffarelli on the 27th August; but the whole coast from Corunna to Guetario remained in the hands of the Allies, and the English vessels of war powerfully contributed to foment the insurrection in these important provinces. At the same time in the centre of Spain

the power of Joseph was so ephemeral, that when Soult, with the armies of the south and centre, passed on in pursuit of Hill's army in the end of October, Elio, the Empecinado, and Bassecour, having united the bands in the neighbourhood of Madrid, reoccupied that capital, where they committed great excesses, and thrust out the garrison, who, with a crowd of helpless dependents, again fell a burden on the unhappy monarch in the plains of Old Castile.¹

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LXVIII.

1812.

Nov. 2.
¹ Belm. i.
246, 247.
Nap. v. 341,
343. Tor. v.
86, 89.

Such was the memorable campaign of Salamanca, one of the most glorious, in a military point of view, of which the English annals can boast; the most decisive in its results in favour of the Allied cause, which had yet occurred in the Revolutionary war. For the first time since the star of Napoleon had appeared in the ascendant, the balance had not only hung even between the contending powers, but inclined decidedly to the other side. At the opening of the campaign, the French armies occupied the whole of Spain, from the Asturian rocks to the bay of Cadiz. The great frontier fortresses of Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo were in their hands; and the British army, restrained within the bounds of Portugal, seemed unable to pass the giants who stood to guard the entrance into the Spanish territory. At its close, both these vital strongholds had been wrested from their arms; Andalusia, and the whole provinces to the south of the Sierra Morena delivered from their oppression; a mortal blow to their power struck on the plains of Castile; Madrid had welcomed its deliverers within its gates; and Cadiz, relieved after its three years' blockade, found the gigantic works of its besiegers, and their two thousand guns, the trophies of its deliverance. In Marshal Soult's words, the battle of Salamanca had indeed proved a great historic event, which had resounded through Europe and the New World. The campaigns of Marlborough had no such momentous triumphs to commemorate; the glories of Cressy and Azincour were in comparison sterile in durable results.

130.
General
results of the
campaign.

Great as was the disappointment felt, in the first instance, in England, at the untoward conclusion of the campaign, and the calamitous issue of the retreat from Burgos, it was yet evident, on a calm retrospect of its

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1812.

131.
Its vast effect
in loosening
the French
power in the
Peninsula.

results, and the relative situation of parties at its commencement and termination, that the success gained had been immense, and that the French power in the Peninsula had received a fatal wound. True, the British standards had been again driven from the Spanish territory; true, Wellington had reassumed his old positions on the Coa and the Agueda: but how had this been effected? By a concentration of the French forces from all parts of Spain, and the abandonment in one month of the fruits of four years of bloodshed, rapine, and conquest. Such a sacrifice could not again be made; no second Andalusia remained to recruit the armies of the north after another overthrow. A fresh disaster like that of Salamanca would drive the invaders, as by a whirlwind, from the whole Peninsula. The sense of this, which pervaded the breasts of the officers and soldiers in both armies, consoled the Allies for their retreat, and depressed the imperial legions even in the midst of their transient success.¹

¹ Vict. et
Conq. xxi. 90.

132.

Especially
from the loss
of Andalusia.

The whole warlike establishments of the latter had been lost; in a military point of view, their hold of all the Peninsula to the south of the Ebro had been loosened. The great arsenals of Madrid, Seville, Ciudad Rodrigo, and the lines before Cadiz, had fallen into the enemy's hands or been destroyed; no reserve parks remained to enable them to attempt the siege of the frontier places of Portugal; no fortresses were yet in their possession to delay the enemy, should he make a second inroad into the interior of Spain; a single disaster on the Douro would instantly compel the evacuation of Madrid and Valencia, and send the whole French armies in confusion behind the Ebro. A sense of this insecurity paralysed the French as much as it animated the British army; the perception of it, joined to an ardent thirst for vengeance for the wrongs they had received, had again revived in a fearful degree the insurrection in the whole provinces of the kingdom not actually in the possession of the imperial troops. The recent appointment of Wellington as generalissimo of the Spanish armies, promised to impart to them a degree of efficiency which they had never previously attained, and to direct them in one uniform plan of operations against the enemy; while

Oct. 12.

the evacuation of more than half, and by far the richest half, of the Spanish territory, proved a still more sensible wound to Napoleon, by depriving him of the means of longer carrying on his favourite system of making war maintain war, and throwing his armies in the Peninsula for their main supplies on the treasury of Paris, already severely drained by the unparalleled expenses of the Russian war.¹

CHAP.
LXVIII.

1812.

¹ Belm. i.
247. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
90.

Memorable as the merits of Wellington had been since the commencement of the Peninsular contest, they were outdone by the shining exploits of this campaign. The secrecy of his preparations, the rapidity and force of his strokes, the judicious direction of his attacks, the vast effects which followed from them, all revealed the consummate commander, now for the first time relieved from the load which had oppressed him, and, by the celerity of his movements, and the skilful use of a central position, counterbalancing what would otherwise have been deemed an insurmountable superiority of numbers. When it is recollected that the English general, with an army which never could bring sixty thousand men into the field, gained these wonderful successes over an enemy who had two hundred and forty thousand effective veteran troops at his disposal, and captured the two great frontier fortresses under the very eyes of two marshals, who, as the event proved, could assemble a hundred thousand men for their relief, it is evident that more than fortune or national courage had been at work, and that consummate generalship had come to the direction of tried valour and experienced discipline. The secrecy of the preparations for, and the rapidity of the attack on Ciudad Rodrigo; the stern resolution of the assault of Badajoz; the eagle eye which caught the moment of decisive victory at Salamanca; the strategic skill which separated the armies of the north and centre, and recovered the advantages gained by Marmont on the banks of the Guarena, form so many models of military skill which will ever engage the attention and command the admiration of succeeding generations.

133.
Wellington's
great merit in
the conduct
of the cam-
paign.

In truth, however, here, as elsewhere in the great revolutions of the world, moral causes were at the bottom of the change; and the talents of individual actors intrusted

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LXVIII.

1812.

134.

Reaction
upon them-
selves of the
French mode
of making
war.

with the direction of affairs were chiefly conspicuous in the sagacity with which they discerned, and the skill with which they availed themselves of, those general impulses to mankind, whose operation, how important soever, was shrouded from the eye of ordinary observers. The more that the memorable history of the Peninsular campaigns is studied, the more clearly will it appear that it was the oppressive mode in which the French carried on the contest which wrought out their ruin; and that it was to Napoleon's favourite maxim, that war should maintain war, that we are to ascribe his fall. Not only did this iniquitous system every where inspire the most unbounded and lasting hatred at their domination, but it imposed upon his lieutenants and viceroys the necessity of such a separation of their forces, with a view to the permanent levying and collecting of contributions, as necessarily exposed them to the danger of being cut up in detail, and precluded the possibility of any combined or united operations. The eccentric irruption into Andalusia, when Wellington in Portugal was still unsubdued, is the chief cause to which all the subsequent disasters in Spain are to be ascribed; and it arose clearly from the necessity of seizing upon hitherto untouched fields of plunder.

135.

Their own
injustice now
recoiled upon
themselves.

The marshals were never weary of expressing their astonishment at the unwise policy which kept their armies detached from each other, and melting away in inglorious warfare in their separate provinces, when the English army retained a central position, menacing alike to them all. But the secret motive of Napoleon in so distributing his force was very apparent. If he brought them into large bodies to wage a united war with the English general, the occupation of many of the provinces would require to be discontinued, the levying of the contributions would cease, and the cost of his armies, hitherto wholly defrayed by Spanish resources, would fall with overwhelming weight on the imperial treasury. Hence arose the dispersion of the armies, the military governments, the jealousies of the marshals, the weakness of the king, the exasperation of the inhabitants, the triumphs of the British, and the loss of the Peninsula. The mighty fabric, based on injustice, reared in rapine,

cemented by blood, involved in itself the principles of its own destruction. The very greatness of its power, the wide spread of its extension, only accelerated the period of its fall. All that was wanting was an enduring enemy, that had discernment enough to see, and talent adequate to improve, the chances thus arising in his favour, and a position where a sure refuge might be found till the period of reaction should arrive. The constancy of England presented such a foe, the eye of Wellington constituted such a commander, and the rocks of Torres Vedras furnished such a stronghold.

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CHAPTER LXIX.

SKETCH OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE—WAR BETWEEN THE
OTTOMANS AND RUSSIANS.—1808—1812.CHAP.
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1.

Durable
interest of the
Eastern
world.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the prodigies of European civilisation, and all the lasting benefits which, both in ancient and modern times, the race of Japhet has conferred upon the species, its history will never equal, in the profound interest which it excites in the human breast, and will continue to awaken to the remotest era of existence, that which arises from the contemplation of the EASTERN WORLD. There is to be found the birthplace of the human race; there lie the scenes alike of the earliest and the most brilliant efforts of civilisation; there the spot on which the fortunes of the whole family of mankind have taken their rise. The greatness of the states of modern Europe may have produced a more durable impression upon the fortunes of the species; the achievements of their intellect may have exalted higher the character of humanity; but they will never awaken so profound an interest as the annals of those states which carry us back to the original separation of nations, and the infancy of mankind. Independent of the interest which naturally attaches to the East, from the sublime events and heartstirring episodes of which in every age it has been the theatre—independent of the obligations which we owe to it as the birthplace of letters and of figures, of knowledge and of religion—there is something in the simplicity of Eastern story, and the pathos of Asiatic incident, which must ever reach the inmost recesses of the human heart.

Although the human race have existed longer there

than in any other part of the globe; although wealth exhibited its earliest prodigies on the plain of Shinar, and commerce first began with the march of the camels through the Syrian deserts; yet society has always worn a more romantic and interesting form in the Eastern than in the Western world. The extremes of civilisation and simplicity, of wealth and poverty, of grandeur and humility, have from the infancy of the world been there brought into close proximity with each other. The splendour of the capital is to be found beside the rudeness of the desert; and the traveller, equally in the days of Herodotus and in the present time, on emerging from the greatest cities, finds himself surrounded by the camels of the children of Ishmael. The whole empires of Central Asia are penetrated in every direction by these nomad tribes. They have in every age formed a distinguishing feature of Asiatic society; and at times have exercised the most important influence on the fortunes of the nations which compose it. Through every subsequent stage of society, nations will recur with interest to these primeval occupations of their race. The scenes, the manners, the imagery of the East, will always form the profoundest chords that can be touched in the human heart; and to the last ages of the world, man by an indelible instinct will revert to those regions of his pristine existence with the same interest with which the individual looks back to the scenes of his own infancy.

Nor are the present situation and future destinies of the Oriental states less calculated to awaken the interest alike of the heedless observer of passing events and the contemplative student of the fortunes of mankind. By a mysterious agency it would appear that the fate of man, even in the most advanced stages of his progress, is indissolubly united with the Eastern world; and the present course of events, not less clearly than the whole scope of prophecy, concur in demonstrating that it is there that the great changes calculated to affect the destiny of the species are to be brought about. The course of civilisation, which hitherto constantly has been from east to west, has now to all appearance begun to alter its direction. The vast wave of civilisation is rolling steadily towards the Rocky Mountains; and its standard will ere

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2.

Singular
extremes of
refinement
and sim-
plicity which
there appear.

3.

Present inte-
rest and
prospects of
the East.

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long be arrested only by the waters of the Pacific. But the progress of mankind is not destined to be thus finally barred. For the first time since the creation of the species, the stream of improvement has set in in the opposite direction: the British Australian colonies are rapidly sowing the seeds of the European race in the regions of the sun; and even the sober eye of historic anticipation can now dimly descry the time when the eastern Archipelago and the isles of the Pacific are to be cleared by the efforts of civilised men, and blessed by the light of the Christian religion.

4.
Political
combinations
of which it is
becoming the
theatre.

Nor are political events less clearly bringing back the interests and the struggles of civilised man to the pristine scene of his birth. The two great powers which have now in an indelible manner impressed their influence upon the human species—England and Russia—are there slowly but inevitably coming into collision. Constantinople is the inestimable prize which, as it will soon appear, brought the empires of France and Russia into hostility, and led to the overthrow of the greatest efforts of European power by the energy of barbaric patriotism and the force of Asiatic cavalry. The same glittering object has retained the rival powers of Great Britain and Russia in thinly disguised hostility since the fall of Napoleon's power; while "the necessity of conquest to existence," felt equally by the British empire in India as by the French in Europe, has already impelled the British battalions, with the usual mixture of success and disaster consequent on such enterprises, over the Himalayan snows. It has turned the stream of victory, for the first time in the annals of mankind, from the shores of the Ganges to the confines of Tartary; arrayed the sable natives of Bengal as victors, in the cradle of the Mogul power, on the edge of the steppes of Samarcand; and brought the British battalions, though in an inverse order, into the footsteps of the phalanx of Alexander.

The structure of society, the condition of mankind, and the causes of human happiness or misery, have always been so different in the Eastern from the Western world, that it would appear as if a separate character had, from the very outset of their career, been imprinted by the finger of Providence on the various races of mankind.

The children of Shem, the dwellers in the tents of the East, are still as widely separated from the descendants of Japhet as when the superior vigour of the European family impressed upon the Roman poet the belief, that to their iron race alone it was given to struggle with the difficulties of humanity, and unfold the secrets of nature.* Their joys, equally with their sorrows, their virtues and their vices, their triumphs and their reverses, the sources of their prosperity and the causes of their ruin, are essentially distinct in these two quarters of the globe; while the peculiarities of the third great family of mankind are still so strongly marked, that there is little reason to believe that it will ever be able to emerge from a state of submission and servitude; and that the prophecy will hold good equally in the last as in the first ages of the world—"God shall multiply Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."¹

Although civilisation has subsisted from the very earliest times among the Eastern nations, and the labours of man have there achieved prodigies of industry far surpassing any which have been reared by the efforts of the Western world; yet no disposition to resist authority, or assert independent privileges, has ever appeared, even in those situations where, from the assemblage of mankind together in great towns, the chief facilities might be supposed to have existed for the extrication of the democratic spirit. Revolts innumerable have occurred, indeed, in every age of Asiatic story; civil wars without end have desolated, and still desolate, their beautiful plains; but they have all been brought about by the casual oppression of particular governors, or the hostility of rival candidates for the throne against each other—never by the general resistance of the many to the rule of the few. With the termination of this unbearable oppression, or the ascent of the throne by the successful competitor, all thoughts even of resistance have passed away from the minds of

* "Audax Iapeti genus
Igнем fraude malâ gentibus intulit.
Post ignem æthereâ domo
Subductum, macies et nova febrim
Terror incubuit coloris.

Nil mortalibus arduum est;
Cælum ipsum petimus stultitiâ."

HORACE, *Carmina*, lib. i. ode 3.

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the people. The commercial cities of Asia Minor, which acquired republican ideas and resisted the authority of Darius, were all of European origin, and evinced, in their character and institutions, the European spirit. No attempt to organise a system of popular resistance to encroachment, such as in every age of European history, alike in ancient and modern times, has formed the great and deserving object of public effort, ever was thought of in the East. From the earliest times to the present moment the whole Oriental world have been strangers alike to the elastic vigour, the social progress, and the democratic contentions of the European race. It is not sufficient to say that they submit now without a thought of resistance to the grossest oppression of their governors, or whomsoever is placed in authority over them. The idea of opposition has never crossed their minds: they have done so without a murmur from the days of Abraham.

7.
Rapid progress of early civilisation in the East.

Owing to the prodigious fertility of their great alluvial plains, and the unbounded riches of nature which there spring up almost unbidden to the hand of the husbandman, the progress of opulence has always been much more rapid in the Eastern than in the Western world. In the great plain of Mesopotamia, one-half of which is composed of a natural terrace, sloping down with a gradual declivity from the Euphrates to the Tigris, and the other of a similar slope, inclining the other way, from the Tigris to the Euphrates,¹ the means of irrigation are provided, as it were, ready made by nature to the hand of man. Nothing is required on his part but to convey away into little channels the beneficent stream which, descending in perennial flow from the Armenian snows, and larger in summer than winter, affords the means of spreading continual verdure and fertility over a soil where vegetation ripens under the rays of a tropical sun. In the Delta of Egypt a level surface of great extent is annually submerged by the fertilising floods of the Nile; and the principal difficulty of man is to clear out the prodigious luxuriance of vegetation which springs up from the solar warmth, when the waters of the river have first regained their natural channel. In the European fields, on the other hand, the productive powers of nature require

¹ Gillies's Greece, v. 89.

to be drawn forth and assisted by a long period of human labour. The operations of draining, planting, and enclosing, which are essential to the improvement of agriculture, are the work of centuries; and the vast profits which in the East reward the first and infant efforts of human cultivation, are gained in the West only by the result of the accumulated labour of many successive generations. Agricultural riches, and consequent commercial opulence, spring up at once in the East with the rapidity and luxuriance of tropical vegetation: they are of slow and difficult growth in the West, like the oak and the pine, which arrive at maturity only after the lapse of ages.

But in proportion to the rapidity with which agricultural wealth, like vegetation, thus springs up under the warmth of an Eastern sun, is the fragile nature of the materials of which it is composed, and the seeds of rapid decay which are involved in its structure. The law of nature seems to be of universal application—all that rapidly comes to maturity is subject to as speedy decay—whatever is destined for long duration is of the slowest growth, and of the most tardy development. The early prodigies of Oriental civilisation were of no longer duration, in the great year of human existence, than the first fruits of spring amidst the quickly succeeding harvests with which the labours of the natural year are crowned. The seeds of decay were sown with no unsparing hand, from the native corruption of the human heart. They found a soil richly prepared for their growth in the physical ease and natural blessings with which man was surrounded. As quickly as the bounties of nature gave him opulence, did his own vices engender wickedness; and the history of the East, from the earliest times, exhibits, in Gibbon's words, "the perpetual round of valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy, and decline."

If the extraordinary rapidity of the growth of wealth and civilisation in the Eastern plains is considered, and the rapid development of the germs of corruption in the human heart under the genial influence of prosperity, it will no longer appear any way surprising that corruption and degeneracy should so speedily have spread in the Asiatic monarchies. Perhaps the only circumstance that will attract wonder is, how the human race has ever been

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8.
Proportion-
ate rapid
growth of
corruption.

9.
Provision
made for its
correction.

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able to extricate itself from the vice and weakness thus incident to the very first steps of its progress. It is more than doubtful, indeed, whether, in a state of society where the working classes are universally and invariably obedient, and no spring of improvement or purification is to be found in the efforts of the lower orders for their political elevation, or the struggles of the poor to better their condition, any means of correcting or removing the wide-spread corruption consequent on early prosperity could be found in the bosom of society itself. But these means are provided with unerring certainty in the physical conformation of the Asiatic continent, and the character which permanent causes have indelibly imprinted on the inhabitants of the greater part of that large portion of the globe. It is only in particular districts of Asia, in the plain of Mesopotamia, on the banks of the Ganges, in the fertile fields of China, or in the alluvial flats of Asia Minor, that the natural riches and advantages are to be found which in every age have overspread the earth with the early prodigies of human industry. In by far the greater part of the Asiatic continent, the physical circumstances of mankind are widely different; and hardship and suffering have imprinted as bold and energetic a character upon the human mind, as ease and opulence have softened and relaxed it in situations blessed with greater natural advantages. It is in the intermixture of these different races of man that the means of continually renovating the human race have been provided.

10.
In the energy
of the Tartar
and Arabian
tribes.

“Asia,” says Montesquieu, “is distinguished by one remarkable peculiarity: the boldest races of men, and the most effeminate, are placed by Nature in close proximity to each other.” This peculiarity arises from the physical conformation of the Asiatic continent. The elevated steppes of Tartary, the arid deserts of Arabia, touch, as it were, the fertile plains of Mesopotamia or Armenia: the ruthless Affghans border on the patient Hindoos. The children of the desert are ever at hand, to punish the vices and obliterate the corruptions of the cities of the plain. In the southern portions of Asia, in the vast peninsula of Arabia, a race of men have existed from the earliest times, on whom hardship and difficulty

have eternally imprinted the same bold and daring qualities. Differing in no respect from their ancestors in the days of Abraham, the children of Ishmael are still to be found in the deserts of Arabia, poor, sober, and enduring. Mounted on their steeds, or seated on their camels, they seek a scanty subsistence amidst sterile gravel or arid sands, and preserve pure, on a rocky soil, and under the rays of a vertical sun, the simplicity and the energy of patriarchal life. Still, as in the days of Cyrus, the pastoral nations of the north wander over the vast table-lands of Tartary, multiplying with the herds and flocks which graze around them, and possessing, even to profusion, those hosts of horses which in every age have constituted the strength of the Scythian tribes.*

It is in the undecaying vigour and ceaseless multiplication of these nomad tribes, that the means of the continual renovation of the human race in the Asiatic empires has been provided. As certainly as the wealth of the plain produces corruption, the hardihood of the north engenders rapacity; and the effeminate monarchies of the East have, in every age, fallen before the daring rovers of the Scythian wilds, with the same certainty that the timid herds of inferior animals perpetually become the prey of the savage lords of the wilderness. The barbarian conquerors, when they settle in the opulent regions of civilisation, in the course of a few generations become as corrupted as the nations they have conquered; but, nevertheless, a certain impulse has been communicated to human vigour, and the extraordinary degeneracy of the seats of opulence is purified, for a season at least, by the infusion of barbarian energy. And when they in their turn, or their descendants, yield from the same causes to the same vices, the same means of regeneration are at hand. Renewed wealth again attracts barbaric rapacity, and a fresh inroad of northern energy restores the fallen dignity of the species.

11.
Which provide the means of continual renovation of corrupted society.

The provision made by nature for the easy and effectual passage of huge bodies of the Tartar tribes, constitutes one

* Among the Tartars to the north of the great range of the Caucasus, there is hardly an individual so poor as not to possess thirty or forty horses: the luxury of the great consists almost entirely in the number of these animals, whose support on these boundless grassy wilds costs nothing: and many of the chiefs possess three or four thousand steeds.—MALTE BRUN, i. p. 172.

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12.
Example of
this in the
conquests of
Timour.

of the most extraordinary features of the Asiatic continent, and in every age has been productive of the most important effects on the history of its nations. Gibbon has told that the immediate cause of the overthrow of the Roman empire was the vigour and ability of the Chinese emperors, who, pressing on the Tartar tribes in the north-eastern extremity of Asia, forced their inhabitants on the central districts of Tartary, and at length impelled the moveable wave on the decayed frontiers of the Roman empire. It is the prodigious extent of pasture lands, capable of furnishing supplies of food for the greatest armies, which is the cause of this astonishing effect. It is narrated by the historian of Timour, that that great warrior, in one of his expeditions from Samarcand against China, marched five months, at the head of four hundred thousand horsemen, constantly in a north-eastern direction, during the whole of which time this immense body of men obtained food by hunting, and the milk of the mares which followed their squadrons, while the horses subsisted on the grass which they were traversing. And of the terrific nature of the devastation which such a horde of barbarians makes when they approach the cities of civilised opulence, some idea may be formed from what occurred when the same conqueror drew near to Bagdad. The trembling inhabitants of that city, aware of the near proximity of the Tartar host, were anxiously straining their eyes in the north-eastern direction, where they were first expected to appear, when the low hills which skirt the Tigris in that direction suddenly became covered with a confused multitude of men and horses, stretching on either side as far as the eye could reach.¹

¹ Petit La-
croix, Vie de
Timour, ii.
47.

13.
Extraordi-
nary capture
of Bagdad by
his host.

Wave after wave rolled onwards during the whole day, like the rising tide on the sands of the ocean, until they arrived at the banks of the Tigris, which they required to cross, before the city could be reached. That broad and deep stream, however, did not for a moment arrest the Scythian host. Impelled alike by the near prospect of plunder, and the imperious commands of Timour, the foremost squadrons plunged into the river; the Tartar horses easily stemmed the current, and the dripping squadrons were in a few minutes seen pursuing their march on the western bank. Band after band of the

immense multitude plunged in with ceaseless vigour ; numbers were crushed to death or drowned by the throng, but still those in front were pushed on by the huge mass behind, until, as with the white ants, a bridge was almost formed across the river by the dead bodies of their comrades. Without a moment's intermission, however, the passage was continued, the town, closely besieged, was soon after stormed ; the greatest part of its inhabitants were put to the sword ; and when Timour left Bagdad in quest of a new theatre of devastation, he left a hundred and twenty pyramids in different parts of the city, each containing a thousand heads, to show where his sabre had been.¹

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¹ Petit Lacroix, *Vie de Timour*, ii. 47, and iii. 184. Price's *History of the Mahomedan Empire*, iii. 361, 366.

The system of government in the East, from the earliest times, has been the same. We have no need to turn to modern travellers for a picture of the social system ; it is to be found sketched out in the books of the Old Testament, and faithfully portrayed in the pages of Xenophon and Herodotus. Rank and authority are every where personal only : power is annexed to office, not to families ; it depends for its establishment and continuance wholly on the will of the sovereign. The throne itself is seldom found to follow the hereditary line of descent : the natural attachment of mankind to the families of their benefactors has commonly, for several generations, secured its continuance in the members of the family of a first founder of an empire ; but no regular principle of succession has been followed, and the most energetic and audacious, whether of legitimate or illegitimate birth, has usually, without opposition, seized the diadem. The people, with that disposition to passive submission which in every age has characterised the inhabitants of Asia, submit without a murmur to a change of dynasty. The victor, generally after a single battle, is instantly saluted as sultaun by all the satraps and cities of the empire ; the stroke of fate is implicitly acquiesced in by all ; and the descendants of a family which have enjoyed the throne for centuries, are consigned without regret to the obscurity from which they sprang, and speedily lost among the multitudes of humble life.

14.
System of Oriental government, and descent of the throne.

The same instability and precarious tenure of power are to be found in a still greater degree among the

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15.

Precarious
tenure of
inferior
authority.

inferior depositories of authority. If the chances of victory, or the mutability of fortune, seat or unseat a dynasty on the throne, the favour of a sultaun, the caprice of a minister, or the accidents of success, still more rapidly place or displace the rulers in the cities and the governors in the provinces. The changes of fortune, which from the earliest ages have existed in the East, appear incredible to those who have been accustomed to the more stable order of things in the western world. The extraordinary adventures, the sudden elevations and as sudden depressions of human life portrayed in the Arabian Nights, are not the brilliant creations of oriental fancy; they are the faithful picture of the continually occurring changes of fortune in the eastern world. A barber may there any day become a vizier; a vizier, if he escapes the bowstring, may often esteem himself happy if he can become a barber.

16.

Identity in
the educa-
tion, and
similarity in
the pro-
spects, of all
classes.

The education of all classes is the same; for this simple reason, that none can foresee with tolerable certainty any material difference in their destiny in life. Nothing is more common than to see, as chief ministers of the sultaun, men who had formerly been trained to the humble duties of street porters: a shoemaker often becomes the high admiral of the Turkish fleet. The descent from greatness is often still more rapid than the ascent. Wealth attracts envy, and cupidity on the throne seldom fails to find pretexts for confiscating the riches, the fruit of connived-at plunder. When the inevitable hour arrives, the victim of imperial cruelty or vengeance submits to the stroke of fate; the ruler of millions of subjects, the master of thousands of soldiers, quietly stretches out his neck to the bowstring; his exorbitant possessions, the object of so much envy, are confiscated to the treasury, or handed over to a more fortunate successor; and his children ere long are found labouring with their hands in the fields, carrying water in the streets, or bearing lances as private soldiers in the ranks of their father's successor.

Improvement, and the spread of opulence in Europe, are the slow growth of successive generations, each of which has added something to the national wealth, or made some additions to the public rights. The virtues or

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17.

Rapid growth
and ephemeral
duration
of wealth and
greatness.

the vices, the weakness or the energy, of the sovereign on the throne, though by no means unimportant elements in the national fortunes, seldom produce a decisive influence on the destinies of the state. The public tranquillity depends on the bravery and virtue of the higher ranks; the public opulence upon the industry and frugality of the lower. But in the East almost every thing turns upon the energy, the talents, and activity of the sovereign on the throne. If he is possessed of martial qualities and shining abilities, the fortunes of the state are speedily raised to the very highest point of elevation: if he is sunk in indolence, or lost in the pleasures of the harem, external disaster and internal dilapidation as speedily ensue. The vigour of a great monarch wielding the despotic powers of government, speedily makes itself felt in every department. Order is maintained by the satraps and governors of provinces, each trembling for the preservation of his own authority; industry and property are protected among the poor; multitudes flock from the adjoining states, to share in the protection of vigour and justice; warriors crowd from all quarters to follow the standards of victory and plunder. Internal triumph, external success, thus rapidly accumulate round the empire of energy and courage; and the immense moveable or floating population of Asia, speedily causes an extraordinary influx of inhabitants into the principal cities of the empire. The whole history of the East, from the earliest ages, is made up of the successive elevations of dynasties or individuals by the efforts of the possessors of the throne, and their as uniform decline, and ultimate extinction, from the degeneracy and effeminacy of their unworthy successors.

In Europe, alike in ancient and modern times, a great degree of stability has been communicated to the acquisitions of civilisation, the conquests of power, and the accumulation of wealth; and although the progress of nations has been interrupted by casual vicissitudes of fortune, yet a long period of prosperity and greatness has been imparted to national existence, and its decline has been owing to a succession of causes which have gradually undermined, and at last dried up the sources of prosperity. But in the East a very different progress

18.

Principles of
vigour more
powerful in
Europe than
in the East.

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presents itself. The rise of power, the growth of civilisation, the marvels of opulence, have always been far more rapid than in the western world ; but, on the other hand, the catastrophes to which they have been subject have been also much more rapid, and the degeneracy by which they have been undermined infinitely more swift in its progress. Though the voice of reason, matured by the lessons of experience, cannot as yet affirm that the European communities, with all their advantages of religion and knowledge, have eradicated from their bosom the seeds of mortality, it may with confidence be affirmed, that as they have been slower of growth, so they will be more durable in existence than the oriental dynasties ; and that the causes of decline, common to humanity, have been combated in the western by far stronger principles of vigour and renovation than have ever appeared in the eastern world.

19.
 And those of
 corruption
 also.

But, for the same reason, corruption, when it does spread through the vitals of the state, will be more deeply rooted in Europe than in Asia ; and if degeneracy does overtake society in its last stages, it will be far more universal in the West than in the East. Nothing is so remarkable in the Asiatic states as the simplicity of manners and habits which prevails beyond the pale of those who actually enjoy the transitory wealth or power which are the consequence of the sultaun's favour. That *they* speedily are corrupted by the possession of wealth, and that the descendants even of the bravest men become, in a few generations, so utterly degenerate as to be incapable of contributing any thing to the defence of the state, may be considered as decisively proved by every period of Asiatic history. But the great bulk of the people, as they share in none of the advantages of wealth and power, so they have at no period been generally affected by its corruptions. If a traveller enters an Asiatic town, he finds the manners of the people and simplicity of domestic life nearly as they appear in the sacred records and the early narrative of Herodotus. In Europe, on the other hand, as political power and opulence have descended far more generally through all classes of society, and communicated in consequence, during the periods of public virtue, a far greater degree of durability and vigour

to political prosperity; so the seeds of corruption, when they do spread, will be in proportion more generally diffused, and degeneracy, when it reaches the middle ranks, more universal and hopeless.

Polygamy is, and ever has been, a dreadful evil in the East; and the extraordinary rapidity with which all races of its conquerors have degenerated, in a few generations after their establishment in the subdued districts, has been doubtless mainly owing to this ruinous institution, which, among the great and affluent, poisons the sources of manhood and energy in the cradle. The Scythian chief himself was bred up amidst his herds and his flocks: wandering on horseback from morning till night, he acquired vigour from habit, and hardihood from necessity. His degenerate offspring, after his conquests had been completed, bred up in the seclusion of the harem, surrounded by women, wealth, and flattery, sensual, capricious, and tyrannical, could hardly be recognised as the offspring of such a parent. But polygamy, with all its attendant train of ills—fawning eunuchs, fiery passions, luxurious seraglios, female jealousy, and sensual corruption—never has, and never can be, a vice of the great body of the people. Necessity, the strongest of all laws, will, in every age and part of the world, confine men to a single wife: the cost of several, or of a train of concubines, is so great, that, like a stud of hunters or race-horses in England, it is altogether beyond the reach of the vast majority of mankind. By leading to the speedy corruption of the higher ranks, this ruinous institution may indeed, and always does, exercise a fatal influence on the *national* fortunes; but its effect on general manners, domestic purity, or the progress of population, is very inconsiderable. In none of these respects, perhaps, is it so powerful an instrument of corruption as the female profligacy and promiscuous concubinage, which, pervading all ranks, is felt as so consuming an evil in all the great cities of western Europe.

20.
Ruinous effects of polygamy, which yet are confined almost entirely to the great.

As no protection, in any age or in any country of Asiatic history, has existed in the spirit of freedom which pervaded the middle or lower classes, or the bulwarks which they have constructed against the tyranny of the sovereign, human industry might have been almost

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21.

Causes of
decay com-
pensated by
other circum-
stances. The
establishment
of village
communities.

destroyed, and the human race become well-nigh extinct in many of its most favoured regions, in consequence of the constant oppression of arbitrary power, or the periodical inroads of the Scythian cavalry, if it were not for three circumstances, eminently characteristic of eastern civilisation, which in every age have formed the principal sources of protection to oriental industry. 1. The first of these is the institution of the village communities, which has been already dwelt on in treating of the condition of the people in India,* and which prevails generally throughout almost every part of the East. Society there appears in its very simplest form. A certain district around a village belongs in common to all its inhabitants. Some are employed in the cultivation of the soil, and with their surplus produce maintain the other classes of the little society, among whom the different trades of blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, masons, barbers, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, and others, are divided; each member of which is bound in his own profession to contribute, sometimes by money, at others by a return in kind, to the wants of the other members of the community. The general tax, or rather tribute, which is imposed upon the whole, is levied by certain persons chosen by all the members, who allocate with great nicety the share of the burden upon each individual, charge themselves with its collection, and account for it to the pasha or other collector of the revenue.

22.

Strong at-
tachment
of the people
to them.

The attachment of the people to these little commonwealths is so strong as to be almost inextinguishable. If the members of it are dispersed by foreign violence, it is perpetuated from generation to generation; the ancient landmarks are preserved; even the sites of the different cottages are imprinted on their memories, and handed down to their children; and if happier times return, and the dispersed community or their descendants can reassemble, they rebuild their fallen walls, and each family lights its fire as nearly as possible on the hearth of its ancestors. But if this village system operates as a protection to the community during prosperous, it comes to press often with dreadful severity in adverse times: the government will rarely, if ever, remit any thing of the

* *Ante*, Chap. xlvil. 19.

fixed tribute from the community; the weight of the exaction thus often comes to fall upon declining numbers; and so grievous does the burden become when the numbers in the community are seriously impaired by sickness or the sword, that the remaining members fly to the desert or the mountains, and the entire depopulation of the country ensues. It is to this cause that both Gibbon and Sismondi ascribe the rapid decline of population in the rural districts of the Roman empire; and the same circumstance is considered by recent observers as the cause of the marked decrease of the population in the contemporary states of Turkey and Persia.¹

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¹ Gibbon, ii.
313, 319.
Sismondi, iii.
232.

2. The next circumstance which has contributed to soften the weight of despotism in the East is the institution of ayans, and the corporate privileges which belong to the members of the different trades in the towns. The former of these are officers appointed by the people to watch over the interests of the cultivators, and shield them from the oppression of the pashas; the latter are the rights which members of the different trades in towns enjoy, and which interpose, between the individual and the oppression of the tax-collector, the important shield of a community having a common interest with himself. Where the ayans do their duty, they are frequently of essential service; and they have, in every age, delayed the ruin of many provinces. But they are often in league with the pashas, and are bribed by the wealth which his extortion has produced to connive at still further enormities. The most effectual security, in consequence, is found to be the incorporating of trades in towns: and hence the observation so common in the East, that industry in the towns is much better protected than in the rural districts, and that the numbers of their inhabitants are often stationary, or even increasing, amidst the desolation and ruin of the fields of the country.²

23.
The ayans
elected to
protect the
people.

² Volney, ii.
87. Olivier, i.
201, 219.

3. The principal protection of the rural population, in unsettled and disastrous times, is to be found in the security which hill fastnesses have afforded to the industry of the people. Mountain ridges of prodigious height and vast extent run through the East in almost

24.
Security of
mountain
fastnesses.

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every direction. Independent of the great stony girdles of the globe, the Caucasus and Himalaya, numbers of considerable mountain ranges branch out from these huge chains in many different directions; and in their valleys the industry of the cultivators is comparatively undisturbed by the exactions of the pashas, or the plunder of the janissaries. Water, also, that indispensable requisite to cultivation over almost all the East, is generally to be had in comparative abundance from the mountain torrents of these alpine regions; and wherever it can be carried, the green field, the flowery orchard, and the smiling cottage, bespeak the residence of happy and industrious man. The rural population, accordingly, in many of the great mountain chains of the East—that of the Bulgarians among the wooded and thickly peopled heights of the Balkan; of the Druses and Maronites on the terraced slopes, or beneath the alpine cliffs of Lebanon; and of the inhabitants of Mount Taurus, among the clear streams and beside the wooded valleys of Asia Minor—often exhibit a degree of general felicity to which hardly a parallel is to be found in any other part of the globe. The cavalry of the pashas is unable to penetrate these rocky dells or wooded recesses; the stern valour of the mountaineers guards the entrance to these asylums of industry and innocence; the demands of government are commuted into a fixed tribute from the district; land is almost always subdivided among the cultivators; and every man, on his little freehold, enjoys undisturbed the fruits of his toil.¹

¹ Volney, ii. 18, 74, 218.
Mariti, ii. 34.
Slade, ii. 38.

25.
Immense number and skill of the horsemen in the East.

² Malte Brun, ii. 301, ii. 107, 110.

The great strength of the East, in every age, has been found to consist in the multitude and admirable dexterity of its horsemen; and this arises from the number of nomad tribes who, in almost all Asiatic states, pervade every part of its territory. Constantly on horseback, these wandering tribes have attained a proficiency in the care and management of that noble animal, unknown in any other part of the world. Their number in the Persian monarchy alone is near a million; those in Asiatic Turkey are still more numerous.² Nor is the high estimation of horses confined to those who still adhere to the roving habits of their forefathers; it

pervades the whole community, and descends to the very humblest and most indigent classes of the people. A beggar in Arabia asks charity mounted, with his family, on several horses; the luxury of the great consists in the number and high breeding of their stallions. The Tartar chiefs to the north of Persia have often three or four thousand steeds for their private property; and the poorest man in their tribe is master of three or four. Uniting the blood of the Arab to the strength of the Tartar horse, these incomparable animals will convey their riders on a predatory excursion of a thousand miles in ten days, carrying with them the scanty provender necessary for crossing the desert which separates them from civilised regions as they go forth, and bearing the ample spoil which their daring masters have amassed on their return.* The Asiatic lives with his horse; his children play with it from their mutual infancy; the attachment on both sides grows with their growth, and strengthens with their strength; and when he has arrived at the full maturity of his powers, the noble Arab steed, endued almost with human sagacity, and fraught with more than human devotion, will die in the strenuous effort to save the playfellow of his infancy from captivity or death.†

If the purity of domestic manners be, as it undoubtedly is, the great source both of public grandeur and private happiness, a powerful antidote to the numerous evils by which they are oppressed has in every age been found from this cause in the East. Notwithstanding the im-

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26.
Simplicity
and purity of
domestic
manners.

* I had this extraordinary fact from my accomplished friend, Sir John M'Neill, so well known and distinguished in the eastern diplomacy of Great Britain.

† A most moving incident, illustrative of the extraordinary strength as well as attachment of the Arab horses, is given by Lamartine in his *Travels in the East*.

“An Arab chief, with his tribe, had attacked in the night a caravan of Dumas', and plundered it: when loaded with their spoil, however, the robbers were overtaken on their return by some horsemen of the Pasha of Acre, who killed several and bound the remainder with cords. In this state of bondage they brought one of the prisoners, named Abou el Marck, to Acre, and laid him, bound hand and foot, and wounded as he was, at the entrance to their tent, as they slept during the night. Kept awake by the pain of his wounds, the Arab heard his horse's neigh at a little distance, and being desirous to stroke, for the last time, the companion of his life, he dragged himself, bound as he was, to his horse, which was picketed at a little distance. ‘Poor friend,’ said he, ‘what will you do among the Turks? You will be shut up under the roof of a khan, with the horses of a pasha or an aga; no longer will the women and children of the tent bring you barley, camel's milk, or *dourra* in the hollow of their hand; no longer will you gallop free as the wind of Egypt in the desert; no longer will

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mense advantages which Europe has long enjoyed from the energy of its character, the freedom of its institutions, and the superiority of its knowledge, it may be doubted whether the sacred fountain of domestic life has been preserved so pure among the poor and needy of its crowded kingdoms, as in the seclusion of the East. The unrestrained social intercourse of the sexes; the incessant activity which prevails; the close proximity in which the poor men and women in great cities are accumulated together; and the general licence of manners which has flowed from the liberty that prevails, and the passion for ardent spirits which is so common among the working classes, have produced a far greater degree of general vice and misery in Europe than has ever obtained, at least among the middle and lower ranks, in the East.

27.

Advantages
which the
seclusion of
the harem
has produced
in the East.

The enormous mass of female profligacy which overspreads all our great towns is there almost unknown. From the seclusion of the harem have, in the middle classes,* flowed purer manners and a more elevated character than has resulted from the constant intermixture of the sexes, and the vehement passions to which it gives rise. It is this simplicity and honesty of disposition, joined to the unaffected devotion and martial qualities by which they are distinguished, which has blinded so many European travellers of the highest talents and discernment to the devastating effects of Asiatic government, and the ruinous consequences which have flowed, particularly during the

you cleave with your bosom the waters of the Jordan, which cool your sides, as pure as the foam of your lips. If I am to be a slave, at least may you go free. Go: return to our tent, which you know so well; tell my wife that Abou el Marck will return no more; but put your head still into the folds of the tent, and lick the hands of my beloved children.' With these words, as his hands were tied, he undid with his teeth the fetters which held the courser bound, and set him at liberty; but the noble animal, on recovering its freedom, instead of bounding away to the desert, bent its head over its master, and seeing him in fetters and on the ground, took his clothes gently in his teeth, lifted him up, and set off at full speed towards home. Without ever resting, he made straight for the distant but well-known tent in the mountains of Arabia. He arrived there in safety, and laid his master safe down at the feet of his wife and children, and immediately dropped down dead with fatigue. The whole tribe mourned him; the poets celebrated his fidelity: and his name is still constantly in the mouths of the Arabs of Jericho."—LAMARTINE, *Voyage dans l'Orient*, vi. 236. Edit. 1836. This beautiful anecdote paints the manners and the horses of Arabia better than a thousand volumes. It is unnecessary to say, after it, that the Arabs are, and ever will be, the first horsemen, and have the finest race of horses in the world.

* The dreadful evils of polygamy among the rich and powerful, to whom, from its vast expense, it is almost entirely confined, have been already noticed. Among the middle classes it is rare; among the poor unknown.

decline of the Persian and Turkish empires, from the weakened authority of the throne, the deplorable contests between the princes of the same family, and the general oppression which the pashas have exercised in the independent sovereignties which they have erected in many of the provinces of these vast empires.*

Encamped for four centuries in Europe, the Turks have deviated in no respect from the manners and customs of their Asiatic forefathers. Although from the day that the cannon of Mahomet the Second opened the breach in the walls of Constantinople, which still exists to attest the fall of the Empire of the East, they have been the undisputed masters of the fairest and richest dominion upon earth, yet the great body of them still retain the primitive customs and habits which they brought with them from the mountains of Koordistan. They have in no degree, until attempted in very recent times, either shared in the improvement, or adopted the manners, or acquired the knowledge of their European neighbours. Their government is still the absolute rule of the sultans and the pashas, the agas and the janissaries; notwithstanding their close proximity to, and constant intercourse with, the democratic commercial communities of modern Europe, they are yet the devout followers of Mahomet; notwithstanding that they every where admit that the Crescent is waning before the Cross, they still adhere in all their institutions to the precepts of the Koran; they rely with implicit faith on the aid of the Prophet, although they are well aware that the followers of Christ are ultimately to expel them from Europe, and themselves point to the gate by which the Muscovite battalions are to enter to place the cross upon the dome of St Sophia.

28.

Immutable
manners and
customs of
the Turks.

* For the preceding account of the civilisation and manners of the East, the author has relied on the older travels of Olivier, Sonnini, Volney, Chardin, Eton, and De Tott, with the more modern narratives of Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Porter, Fraser, Morier, Walsh, Urquhart, and Slade. The particular references are in general not given on the margin, because they would cover it with too dense an array; and the statements in the text are founded rather upon a comparison of their different accounts, and the conclusions which the author, after much reflection on the subject, has drawn from them, than from any particular passages which specially and to the letter support the statements which he has given. And he hopes that such a summary will not be deemed misplaced, even in a work of European history; the more especially, when the important questions now wound up with the policy of the East are considered, and the intimate connexion which the English nation, both from its national policy and the extent of its oriental dominions, has with the future destinies of that important portion of the globe.

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29.

The Mahometan religion is the cause of this tenacity.

¹ Malte Brun, iv. 266, 267.

30.

Aud must ever render all attempts at Turkish reform abortive.

A very sufficient reason may be assigned for this inviolable adherence of the Turks to their Asiatic customs, notwithstanding their close proximity to European civilisation, and the innumerable evils which they have suffered from the superiority of the European discipline. Their RELIGION renders them incapable either of alteration or improvement. The Koran contains several admirable precepts of morality, drawn from the sages of antiquity, and many sublime truths borrowed from the Gospel ; but in all the parts where it is original, it is either a wild rhapsody, inapplicable to the rest of the world, or a rude code, suited to none but a horde of oriental conquerors. Nevertheless, it forms not only the religious standard of faith, but the civil code of law : the whole decisions of the cadis in Mussulman states are founded on texts of the Koran ; all the maxims of the muftis and supreme religious council are drawn, without comment or amplification, from its injunctions.¹ The celebrated saying ascribed to the Arabian conqueror who destroyed the Alexandrian library, "If these books contain the truth, it is already in the Koran, and therefore they are superfluous ; if what they contain is not there, it is false, and therefore they should be destroyed," designates the whole system of their civil and ecclesiastical government.

Minutely specifying almost all the particulars of government, containing every possible direction for the regulation of the interests of society as it existed around the dwelling of Mahomet, and the cradle of his religion, it is necessarily inapplicable to a different state of society, where separate interests have arisen, and unforeseen passions and difficulties have emerged. All attempts, therefore, at the renovation or regeneration of the Turkish, as of every other Mahometan empire, must necessarily fail, because, before they can be generally adopted, the people must have ceased to be Mahometans ; the priests must have ceased to be the expounders of the law ; the sway of the Sultaun to be the delegated authority of Mahomet ; the Koran to be the supreme code in all matters, civil and religious, from which there is no appeal. This is, with a view to their respective political effects, the grand distinction between the Christian religion and that of Mahomet. Prescribing nothing for external form,

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enjoining little for ecclesiastical government, studiously avoiding all allusion to political institutions, the Gospel directs all its efforts to the purification of that great fountain of evil—the human heart.

Destined in the end to effect powerful changes, both in the dispositions of man, the frame of society, and the powers of government, it aims directly at neither of the latter objects: it is to work out the predicted end, to accomplish the ultimate designs of Providence, by its unobserved influence upon the human heart. The Koran, on the other hand, specifies *every* thing which its disciples are to do, from the division of property among children upon the death of a parent to the number of daily ablutions to be performed by the faithful. Reform of institutions, or change of manners, therefore, is impossible in a Mahometan state; for it can be attempted only at the hazard of destroying the great bond of nationality, Mahometanism itself. It is as impossible as for a child to grow to maturity, who in early youth has been cased in a rigid suit of armour: his figure cannot enlarge unless his fetters are burst. The one faith proposes to reform the heart by the institutions; the other, to reform the institutions by the heart. Whoever will reflect on this distinction cannot fail to perceive that the one religion, calculated with extraordinary sagacity to produce a great impression, and in some respects improvement, among the Asiatic tribes for whom it was intended, was wholly unfit for the progressive destinies and different circumstances of mankind; while the other, though producing in the outset a less change in society, from its enjoining no external ceremonial or outward institutions, was adapted for every imaginable state of human progress, and fitted to pour the stream of real regeneration into the human heart to the end of the world.

31.
Important
difference in
this respect
of Christi-
anity.

But although the Mahometan religion thus opposes an invincible bar to the improvement of the Turkish empire, or the engrafting upon its aged stock of any part of the free institutions of Christian Europe, and renders chimerical all the projects which have been formed in recent times for its political reformation; yet there can be no doubt that, for several centuries after it was established in Europe, the extraordinary strength and formi-

32.
In the first
instance the
Mahometan
religion won-
derfully
strengthened
Turkey.

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dable power of the Osmanlis were mainly owing to the religious fervour with which its Asiatic inhabitants were inspired. Not only were their conquests effected during the fervour of a new faith, when the Arabians, with the scimitar in one hand and the Koran in the other, poured into all the adjoining states to seek the houris of Paradise in the forcible conversion of the world ; but the religious veneration with which the family of the first founder of the empire was regarded, gave a degree of stability to its institutions which has never obtained elsewhere in the East. Alone of all the oriental dynasties, the descendants of the same family have sat upon the throne of Constantinople for four hundred years ; and although many irregularities in the choice of the princes and the order of descent have occurred, and many fearful crimes have stained their annals, the throne has always been filled by the descendants of Othman. In this way the Turkish empire has been saved from that perpetual recurrence of civil wars upon every accession, which has ruined the independence or halved the population of her immediate neighbours in Poland and Persia ; and without the hereditary succession to the throne having been formally recognised, the Ottoman dominions have substantially obtained most of the benefits of that invaluable institution.

33.
Extent and
magnitude of
the Turkish
empire.

The provinces which fell to the Turks upon the overthrow of the Lower Empire were immense, and embraced perhaps the fairest portion and most delightful regions of the earth. Their empire still extends, notwithstanding the great losses it has sustained in the last seventy years, to eight hundred and fifteen thousand square geographical miles—a surface about nine times that of Great Britain, which contains ninety-one thousand. Although, however, the extent of its surface is so great, and the climate so benign that the plains in general yield thirty or forty, in some places as much as two hundred fold ;* although the mountains, cut in terraces, will yield fruits and crops to the height of several thousand feet above the sea—yet the population of the whole empire in Asia and Europe does not at the highest estimate exceed twenty-five, and by

* “ In the plains of Mesopotamia, near Bagdad, the land, from the effects of irrigation, yields, under a very rude cultivation, *two hundred fold*.”—MALTE BRUN, ii. 117.

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the lowest estimate is brought down to eight or nine millions. The largest of these numbers only gives twenty-eight souls to the square mile, while the lower will only yield nine; while England, with far inferior climate and natural advantages, contains now three hundred, and the British islands as a whole, two hundred and twenty-seven.* More decisive proof cannot be figured of the desolation practically produced by the Turkish government, or of the extent to which the most boundless gifts of nature may be rendered nugatory by the long-continued oppression of oriental tyranny. In fact, it is only in the great towns and mountainous regions of the country that any considerable population is to be seen: its finest plains are nearly desolate; nine-tenths of the state of Mesopotamia, the garden of the world, capable itself of nourishing forty millions of souls, is an arid or gravelly desert; not a seventh of the rich alluvial soil in Wallachia or Moldavia is cultivated; and the wild grass of nature comes up to the horses' girths, from the gates of Constantinople to the mosques of Adrianople.¹

¹ Malte Brun,
 ii. 166, 167.

34.
 Its boundless
 natural ad-
 vantages.

Yet the world hardly affords so noble a country as that which at this period was still desolated by the sway of the Osmanlis. Bounded by the Euphrates on the east, the Mediterranean or the Libyan deserts on the south, the Adriatic on the west, and the steppes of the Ukraine on the north; containing the isles of Greece, the forests of Macedonia, the cedars of Lebanon, in its bosom; numbering the Nile, the Danube, and the Euphrates among its inland streams; embracing all the nations who fought at Troy among its subjects, all the realms which have enlightened the world among its provinces; giving law at once to Egypt and Jerusalem, to Nineveh and Babylon, to Athens and Constantinople; connected together by a vast inland sea, navigated by hardy and skilful seamen, enjoying hundreds of the finest harbours in the world on its shores; with the vine and the olive clothing its slopes, the orange and the citron loading its isles, the oak and the pine flourishing on its mountains, the maize and the rice waving on its plains,—it seemed to enjoy every

* By the census of 1841, the British islands contained 26,860,000 souls, which, spread over their total surface of 122,000 square miles, gives 227 on an average per square mile. In England the proportion is 291, the population being 15,000,000, and the square English miles 50,387.

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advantage which the bounty of nature could accumulate, to bestow happiness and contentment on the human race. But all these blessings have been blasted by the despotism of the East and the rigidity of the Mahometan rule: its noble plains were fast relapsing into deserts; its capacious harbours deserted; wild beasts were resuming their dominion amidst the ruins of former magnificence; population, amidst the rapid increase of the European states, was retrograding, and fears were entertained for the extinction of the human race in those realms of boundless riches where the species was first created.¹*

¹ Malte Brun,
ii. 117.

35.
Incompara-
ble advan-
tages and
beauty of
Constanti-
nople.

But amidst the general decay of the Turkish empire, the matchless situation and natural advantages of CONSTANTINOPLE still attracted a vast concourse of inhabitants, and veiled under a robe of beauty the decline of the Queen of the East. This celebrated capital, the incomparable excellence of whose situation attracted the eagle eye of Alexander the Great; which made the Romans forget the sanctity of the Capitol, and transferred the metropolis of the world to the shores of the Bosphorus; which rent in twain the dominion of the legions, and yet singly sustained for a thousand years the empire of the East; which drew aside the crusaders from the storm of Jerusalem, and attracted the Osmanlis from their deserts to the shores of the Bosphorus; which threatened in one age every monarchy in Europe, and existed in another by their mutual jealousy at its acquisition—had long formed the real object of discord between the courts of Paris and St Petersburg. The desires of the cabinet of St Petersburg had been for above a century fixed on its acquisition; towards that object all their efforts had, since the days of Peter the Great, incessantly been directed, and it was only by the active interference of England that the total overthrow of the Turkish empire had been averted, on the eve of the revolutionary war, after the fall of Oczakoff. So firmly bent was the Em-

* Upwards of fifty years ago, fears were entertained of the entire extinction of the human race in the eastern provinces of the Turkish empire.—ERON'S *Turkish Empire*, 264. And the same fears are expressed by a more recent observer for some of the western provinces, particularly the plains of Roumelia, Wallachia, and Moldavia.—WALSH'S *Constantinople*, i. 193, 194; and BUCKINGHAM'S *Mesopotamia*, i. 212.

press Catherine on this splendid acquisition, that she named her eldest grandson Alexander, and his second brother Constantine; hoping that the former would rival the glories of the Macedonian conqueror, and the latter again renew on the Bosphorus the sway of the Cross and the lustre of the Eastern empire.

During the anxieties and dangers of that dreadful contest, the designs of the cabinet of St Petersburg for the acquisition of Constantinople had for a time been suspended; but its projects, guided by aristocratic foresight, were never forgotten. Even while yet reeking with the blood of Friedland, Alexander turned his anxious attention to the long-cherished projects of his family and court; and Napoleon, bent on the acquisition of Spain for himself, gave a verbal consent, during the conference of Tilsit, to the entire expulsion of the Turks from Europe by the Russians.* But Roumelia and Constantinople were excluded from this partition, and their destination left in the dark, even when it was agreed that the Osmanlis should be expelled from all their other possessions in Europe. Napoleon, as he himself has told us, never could bring his mind to consent to the cession of the Queen of the East to his northern rival: it soon afterwards, as will immediately appear, formed the subject of angry contention between them. Combined with jealousy concerning Poland, and the strict observance by Russia of the Continental System, it was one of the real causes of the Russian invasion; and the principal reason which directed the mighty conqueror to Moscow instead of St Petersburg, was the secret project which he entertained of turning his victorious arms, after the subjugation of the Muscovites, to the southward, and placing on his victorious brows the diadem of the Eastern empire.¹ †

It is not surprising that Constantinople should thus in every age have formed the chief object of human ambition. Placed midway between Europe and Asia, it is at

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36.
Long-standing designs
of Russia
upon it.

¹ Chamb. ii.
234.

* *Ante*, Chap. xlv. § 81.

† Napoleon's designs on Constantinople were of old standing, and had constantly occupied his mind since the treaty of Tilsit. Shortly after that peace, when one of the chief persons in his councils spoke on the subject of a general peace, he replied, with a frankness very unusual to him, "A general peace! it will be found only at Constantinople."—CHAMBRAY, ii. 235.

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37.
Description
of Constanti-
nople con-
sidered in
reference to
the advan-
tages of situ-
ation.

once the natural emporium where the productions of the east and west find their mutual point of contact, and the midway station where the internal water-communication of Europe, Asia, and Africa unite in a common centre. While the waves of the Mediterranean and the Ægean bring to its harbour the whole productions of Egypt, Libya, Italy, and Spain, the waters of the Danube, the Dneister, and the Wolga, waft to the same favoured spot the agricultural riches of Hungary, Germany, the Ukraine, and Russia. The caravans of the desert, the rich loads of the camel and the dromedary, meet within its walls; the ample sails and boundless riches of European commerce—even the distant pendants of America and the New World—hasten to its quays to convey the vast productions of the old to the new hemisphere. An incomparable harbour, where a three-decker can without danger touch the quay, while from its yard-arms a bold assailant may almost leap, like the Venetian Dandolo of old, on the walls, affords, within a deep bay several miles in length, ample room for all the fleets in the world to lie in safety. A broad inland sea, enclosed within impregnable gates, gives its navy the extraordinary advantage of a safe place for pacific exercise and preparation; narrow and winding straits on either side, of fifteen or twenty miles in length, crowned by heights forming natural castles, render this matchless metropolis impregnable to all but land forces. It is the only capital in the world, perhaps, which can never decline as long as the human race endures, or the present wants of mankind continue; for the more that the west increases in population and splendour, the greater will be the traffic which must pass through its gates in conveying to the inhabitants of its empires the rich products of the eastern sun; and the more that Asia revives or Russia advances in civilisation, the more boundless must be the wealth which will be poured into its bosom by the vast arteries which collect from their plains the boundless streams of eastern cultivation.

Nor are the beauty of Constantinople and the natural excellence of its situation inferior to the commercial advantages which, for a thousand years, prolonged the existence of the Byzantine, and now singly compensate

the decay, of the Turkish empire. The powers of the greatest historical and descriptive painters of England and France have hardly sufficed to portray its varied charms; and if the pencils of Gibbon and Lamartine have, in it, found materials to crowd successive chapters of their immortal works, a subsequent writer can hardly be expected to do justice to it in a single paragraph. Situated, like Rome and Moscow, on seven hills, but enjoying, unlike them, the advantages of a maritime situation and the refreshing breezes of the ocean—exhibiting in its successive terraces, which rise from the margin of the water, a unique assemblage of European domes, green foliage, and eastern minarets; with the noble harbour of the Golden Horn, five miles in length, and yet capable of having its mouth closed by a single chain, crowded with all the flags of Europe, lying in its bosom; and the blue expanse of the Sea of Marmora, studded by white sails and light barques, opening in its front—it presents an assemblage of striking points unparalleled in any other quarter of the globe. But great as is the lustre of the capital, it is outdone to the real lover of the beauties of nature by the extraordinary variety and richness of the scenery in the channel of the Bosphorus, where the stream which unites the Euxine to the Sea of Marmora winds its devious course for nearly twenty miles through bold headlands and lofty promontories; one shore of which, resplendent with the smiling villas, umbrageous woods, and hanging gardens of the East, falls so rapidly into the sea, that the acacia dips its branches in the wave, and the sails of the largest merchantmen almost touch the dark green cypresses that crowd the shore. On the opposite coast, the features bear the character of savage magnificence; the villages bespeak the wildness of oriental manners, the havens the spontaneous bounty of nature; while such is the depth of the ocean even close to the shore, that a seventy-four can lie in safety at the foot of the rocks, moored to the root of the lofty evergreen oak, whose branches intermingle with its masts.¹

The principal strength of the Turks, like that of all other Asiatic nations, has always consisted in their cavalry; and no nation ever was better provided with light horse. Independent of the nomad tribes of Asia, which, as

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38.

Description
of Constanti-
nople itself.

¹ Lamartine,
Gibbon,
Slade.

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39.
Admirable
cavalry of the
Turks.

already mentioned, penetrate its eastern provinces in every direction, the European and Asiatic proprietors, who equally hold their land under the tenure of military service as spahis, furnish at all times a powerful body of admirable cavaliers. Every Turk, and, in fact, almost every oriental, is by nature a horseman. From their earliest infancy they are accustomed to the saddle; from childhood upwards their horses are their companions; in youth, their principal exploits and rivalry consist in the management of their steeds; and in maturer years, all their journeys are performed on horseback. Beyond the distance of a few miles from some of their great towns, there is no such thing as a carriage-way in any part of Turkey. Even the ladies of the harem perform their distant journeys in this manner, or on baskets slung on each side of camels; and in the management of the rein and the firmness of their seat, often rival the most accomplished horsemen of Western Europe.¹

¹ Valentini,
Guerre des
Turcs, 12, 13.40.
The Spahis.

There are great varieties, however, in the quality of the Turkish horse; and none are comparable in dexterity and equipment to the spahis, who inhabit the broad and wooded Mount Hæmus. These horsemen are almost all proprietors of the ground, or their sons; and they hold their land by the tenure of military service, when called on by the Grand Seignior. Accustomed from their infancy to climb the wooded declivities of their native hills, they early acquire an extraordinary skill and hardihood in the management of their steeds. A spahi will often ride at full gallop up hills, over torrents, through thick woods, along the edge of precipices, or down steeps, where a European horseman would hardly venture even to walk. This extraordinary boldness increases when they act together in masses. When so assembled, they dash down rocks, scale scaurs, and drive through bushwood in the most surprising manner. No obstacles intimidate, no difficulties deter, no disorder alarms them. The attacks of such bodies are in an especial manner to be dreaded in rugged or broken ground, where European infantry deem it impossible for cavalry to act at all. The heads of two or three horsemen are first seen peeping through the bush-wood, or emerging out of the steep ravines by which the declivities are furrowed.² Wo to the battalion or division

² Veterani,
Campagne,
34. Valen-
tini, 12.

that does not instantly stand to its arms, or form square on such videttes appearing. In an instant, five hundred or a thousand horsemen scale the rocks on all sides ; with loud cries they gallop forward upon their enemy ; the Turkish scimitar is before their horses' heads, and in a few minutes a whole regiment is cut to pieces.

Although, however, the Turkish horse constitutes the main strength of their armies, yet they have the command of a very numerous body of foot-soldiers. These originally consisted of the military feudatories, who held their land for service in war, just as the feudal tenants of Christian Europe did. They constituted the main strength of the Ottoman armies in their best days, and their number was variously estimated at from forty thousand to sixty thousand men. But a new method of recruiting the foot service was adopted by Orkhan, father to the famous Amurath the First, who selected a fifth part of the most robust of the prisoners of the Christian nations, whom he compelled to adopt the Mahometan faith, and from whom, or their sons, he formed a new body of troops called the Yenetcheræ or Janissaries, who soon acquired an extraordinary celebrity in the European wars. Their discipline and mode of fighting was very similar to that of the English light infantry or French tirailleurs. From being constantly embodied, they soon acquired a high degree of perfection and discipline ; and at a time when no other power in Europe had a similar force to oppose them, they were wellnigh irresistible. At the siege of Malta, under Solyman the Magnificent, during the reign of Charles the Fifth, and in the repeated invasions of Hungary which took place in that time, till the siege of Vienna in 1683, they were the terror of all Christendom. This favoured body soon came to enjoy so many privileges, and so much consideration, particularly from the privilege of setting up a trade in any town, that great numbers of persons in all parts of the empire enrolled themselves under their banners. Their whole number throughout the empire might amount, at the treaty of Tilsit, to one hundred thousand persons capable of bearing arms, of whom eighteen or twenty thousand were to be found in Constantinople or the adjoining villages.¹ Not more than a third of this number, however, were

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41.
Their feudal
militia and
janissaries.

¹ Malte Brun,
ii. 138, 184.
Valentini, 14,
15.

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permanently embodied, except on a particular crisis ; but they were all liable to be called on when the service of the state required it ; and sixty or seventy thousand excellent soldiers could in this way be arrayed, when any crisis demanded their services, round the standards of the Prophet.

42.
And fellahs,
or ordinary
foot-soldiers.

In addition to these regular forces of feudal militia, the Grand Seignior was entitled at any time to call out the whole Mahometan population in his dominions capable of bearing arms ; and although such an array, often hastily brought together, and always undisciplined, would not in any European nation have been formidable, yet it was by no means to be despised, from the peculiar habits of the Ottomans. In consequence of the troubled state of the country, and the great pride which they take in costly weapons, every Turk is accustomed to the use of arms. They are in general adepts in the management of the gun, the pistol, the scimitar, and the lance. Being almost all either sturdy cultivators or hardy cavaliers, they are equally ready for the foot or the horse service ; and, what was wholly unknown in any other army, an officer might, with perfect security, at any time put a janissary on horseback, or enrol a spahi among the companies of foot-soldiers. The Turkish artillery was long superior to that of the European powers ; and although it has not kept pace with the progress of western science, and had sunk from its former celebrity during the wars of the eighteenth century, yet it was still formidable from the great number of guns which their armies brought into battle, and the rapidity with which their admirable horses moved them from one part of the field to another.¹

² Val. 13, 14.

43.
Cause of the
decay of the
Turkish mi-
litary force.

An empire possessing military resources of this description, while animated by the spirit of religious zeal, and held together by the bond of successful plunder, was a most formidable object of apprehension to the Christian powers. On many occasions it was only by the most strenuous efforts, and a union among the western powers that could hardly have been expected, that Christendom was saved from Mahometan subjugation. But religious zeal, and the lust of conquest, though two of the most powerful passions which ever rouse the human breast, cannot be relied on for permanent efforts.

The first generally burns so fiercely that it extinguishes itself after a few generations ; the second, dependent on the excitement of worldly desires, is kept alive almost entirely by the continuance of worldly success. The vicious institutions and wasting tyranny of the Turkish empire, were incapable of furnishing that steady support to military power which originated with the hereditary aristocracy and free spirit of western Europe. The Christians had at first the utmost difficulty in stemming the torrent of Asiatic invasion ; and the destinies of the world never, perhaps, hung so nicely balanced as when Charles conquered the Saracens on the field of Tours, or when John Sobieski raised the siege of Vienna with the Polish lances. But these two memorable battles, by stopping the career of conquest, and cooling the ardour of fanaticism in the ranks of the Mahometans, proved fatal to their cause both in western and eastern Europe. Disaster never ceased to succeed disaster till, though after the lapse of many centuries, the arms of the Moors were forced backward from the banks of the Loire across the Straits of Gibraltar ; and the jealousy of the European powers, excited by the inestimable prize of Constantinople, alone has prevented them, long before this time, from driving the Turks across the Bosphorus into their native seats in the deserts of Asia.

During the decline of the Ottoman empire, which has now continued to recede for a hundred and fifty years, they have, however, maintained many long and bloody wars, both with the Austrians and Russians ; and the tenacity with which they still hold their territory, and the vigour with which they have so often risen from shocks which seemed fatal to their cause, prove what powerful elements of strength exist in the courage and energy of the Turkish population to resist so many external disasters, and the more unobserved but fatal influence of such long-continued internal oppression. This tenacity of life is the more remarkable, when it is recollected that every where a half, in some places two-thirds, of the whole population of the empire are Christians ; and that nations and sects of all imaginable varieties compose the motley array of the inferior classes of the Ottoman empire. The merchants are almost all Greeks or Armenians ; the sailors, islanders from the Archipelago ; the

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44.
Varied population of which this empire is composed.

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¹ Malte Brun,
ii. 137.

money-lenders, Jews ; the watermen and cultivators generally the descendants of the inhabitants of the old Greek empire. Three millions of Turks in Europe, and perhaps four millions in their Asiatic dominions—hardly more than a half, perhaps not a third, of the whole inhabitants—not only retain all this varied population in entire subjection, but compel them to labour for their support, and to pay taxes to their government: a fact which, however surprising, is thrown into the shade by the still more wonderful sway maintained by a much smaller number of British over the immense population of the Indian peninsula.¹

45.
Turkish fortresses.

The fortresses of Turkey are far from being worthy of respect, if the construction of their ramparts is alone taken into consideration ; but they become most formidable strongholds from the manner in which they are defended by the Mussulman population. They have no idea of bastions or covered ways, nor of one rampart enfilading another, nor of the system of outworks, which form the strength of modern fortifications. Brahilow, Widdin, and Belgrade, which possess these advantages, have all owed them to the Christian powers which at different times have had them in their hands. The real Turkish fortresses, such as Silistria and Roudschouck, on the Danube, are merely towns surrounded by a lofty wall, in front of which runs a deep ditch. Here and there a few round towers or bastions form so many salient angles, but they are of no other use than to mount a few cannon. On the top of the wall is placed a row of gabions, with embrasures for guns, behind which the besieged are completely screened from the fire both of artillery and musketry ; and at short distances are loop-holed guard-houses, from which they keep up a destructive fire on the assailants. Subterraneous passages are worked under the ramparts, by which they are enabled to fill the lower part of the ditch above the water with musketeers, who often prove extremely fatal on an assault. The strength of the Turkish fortifications, therefore, does not consist in the solidity of the works, or their scientific construction ; but the obstinacy of their defence
² Val. 62, 63. often renders them more formidable obstacles than the most regular ramparts of western Europe.²

A very sufficient reason may be assigned for the resolute manner in which the Ottomans defend their walls: it is necessity. The Grand Seignior makes no distinction between misfortune and pusillanimity. The bowstring in general awaits alike the victim of superior power and the betrayer of patriotic duty; and such is the inveteracy with which war has long been carried on between the Mussulman and Christian powers, that all the inhabitants are well aware that death or captivity awaits them if the town is carried by assault, or even surrendered by capitulation. Thus their only chance of safety is in the most resolute resistance. Thirty thousand persons, of whom one-half were inhabitants of the town, perished in the assault of Ismael in 1789: fifteen thousand were made prisoners, and for the most part sold as slaves, or transported into the country of the conqueror. Thus the terrible maxim of ancient war, *væ victis*, is constantly before the eyes alike of the citizens as of the garrisons of Turkish fortified towns; and as the calamity involves alike persons of all religions who are found within the devoted walls, it unites all persuasions, Christians, Jews, and Mussulmans, in one common and cordial league against the ruthless assailants.¹

The assault of the rampart is generally considered in Western Europe as the termination of a siege; many brave commanders have deemed their duty sufficiently discharged, when they held out till the breach was practicable; and even the more rigorous code of military duty established by Napoleon only required one assault to be withstood. In Turkey, on the other hand, the mounting of the breach is but the beginning of the serious part of the defence. The Turks seldom disquiet themselves about retarding the approaches of the besiegers: frequently do not return a shot to the breaching batteries; let the ruined part of the rampart take its chance; but bend their whole efforts to the preparation of the means of defence against the assaulting columns who get in by that entrance. For this purpose every ledge, roof, window, and wall, which bears upon the approach to the breach, or the space inside of it behind the rampart, is lined with musketeers, and columns are arranged on either side of the opening within the wall, to assail the

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46.

Causes of
their resolu-
tion in de-
fending them.¹ Val. 63, 65.

47.

Desperate
Turkish de-
fence of the
breaches of
fortified
towns.

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enemy when, disordered by the tumult of success, he has descended into the interior of the place. In the deadly strife which then ensues, the superior equipments and skill in the use of arms of the Turks generally prove superior to the discipline of the Europeans: in personal contests the bayonet is no match for the scimitar, at least when wielded by the janissaries. Every Turk, besides his musket, has a pair of pistols, a sabre, and slightly-curved poniard, two feet long, of fearful efficacy in combats hand-to-hand: and they have all been accustomed almost daily to the use of these arms from their infancy. It may readily be conceived that when the Christian columns, armed only with the bayonet, out of breath and disordered by the rush and ascent of the breach, find themselves suddenly assailed in front and on both flanks by such antagonists so armed, it is seldom indeed that they can come off victorious; and in fact it would never so happen, were it not that the Ottomans, though constitutionally brave, are sometimes seized with unaccountable panics, which lead them to take to flight at a time when the means of victory are still in their power.¹

1 Val. 62, 63.

48.
Mode of warfare by the Russians against the Turks.

The long-established and often-experienced superiority of the Ottoman cavalry early led to a very peculiar organisation and array of the Russian armies by whom they were to be opposed. Squares of infantry were soon found to be the only effectual mode of resisting the attacks of that fiery and redoubtable horse, and for a considerable time these squares consisted of the whole army, which was drawn up in one solid column, like the corps of Korsakoff at Zurich, in 1799.* It was in a great degree owing to this defective organisation that Peter the Great was reduced to such extremities on the Pruth in the early part of the eighteenth century. But it was at length discovered that the greater part of the Christian host was under such an arrangement kept in crowded ranks, in a state of perfect inefficiency; and therefore the more eligible plan was adopted of forming lesser squares, none of which were composed of more than twelve battalions. These squares had their artillery at the corners, the officers were in the centre, the cavalry outside, but ready to be withdrawn into the interior if necessary; and the masses

* *Ante*, Chap. xxviii. § 47.

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were placed at such distances, in an angular position towards each other, that the enemy's horse were generally exposed, on penetrating between them, to a fire on each flank: just as the Mamelukes were, by a similar arrangement on Napoleon's part, at the battle of the Pyramids. At the battle of Kagul in 1770, the Russians had five of these squares; and at the affair of Schumla, on the 30th June 1774, Romanzoff advanced to the attack of the Turks in the same formation.¹

¹ Bounhord,
72. Val. 18,
20.

More recently, however, and since discipline has so much improved in the Muscovite ranks, the ordinary system is to advance, as is usual against other troops, in open columns, from whence it is easy to form squares when the enemy are at hand. The constant habit of combating in this manner, and of looking for safety, not to flight, which would be utterly vain before the Turkish cavalry, but to the strength of their squares, has contributed in no small degree to the remarkable steadiness of the Russian infantry. On the other hand, the extreme ease with which the cavaliers can always make their escape on their admirable horses has increased the natural disposition of the Asiatic people to desultory warfare, and confirmed that tendency to dissolve after any considerable disaster, which more or less belongs to all but regular troops, and justified the saying of the old Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, who with Suwarroff defeated them so severely in 1789, that "whenever he had once given the Turks a good beating, he felt no disquietude about them for the remainder of the campaign."²

49.
The present
tactics of the
Russians in
the Turkish
wars.

² Val. 26,
28. Jom.
Guerres de la
Revol. i. 236.

The Turkish method of fighting exactly resembles that of the ancients; and a battle with them recalls to us those actions between the Romans and Asiatics of which Livy and Polybius have left such graphic descriptions. They constantly fortify their camps; and when the day of battle arrives, draw out their forces in regular array in front of their intrenchments, where their stores, tents, ammunition, and riches are deposited. When the combat begins, they pour down with loud cries and extreme impetuosity, often on three sides at once of the squares of their enemy; the whole plain is covered with their horsemen; while their numerous guns endeavour to shake the enemy's array. It requires no small steadiness even in

50.
Turkish mode
of fighting.

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veteran troops to withstand such a charge. In close or single combat, whether in the field or in the breach, the European bayonet has never proved a match for the Turkish scimitar; and no other nation is likely to find it more efficacious, when it failed in the hands of the French grenadiers in the breach of Acre, and of the Russian infantry on the ramparts of Roudschouck.* Generally speaking, accordingly, the Russian horse seek safety within the battalions of their infantry. Often the Turkish cavaliers, half-drunk with opium, pierce even the most solid squares; and instances are not wanting of their having, amidst the smoke and the strife, gone right through, and escaped on the opposite side without knowing where they had been. But if the first onset fails, as is often the case, the strength of the Ottomans, like the spring of a wild beast, is broken; it is no easy matter to make them rally for continued efforts; and if fortune proves in the end adverse, the vast array frequently disperses—every man returns to his home by the shortest road—the intrenched camp, with the whole stores and artillery of the army, is carried by storm; and the Vizier, who had a few days before been at the head of a hundred and fifty thousand men, is sometimes scarcely able to collect ten thousand round the standards of the Prophet.¹

¹ Val. 9, 11,
26. Jomini,
Art de la
Guerre, ii.
590, 591.

51.
Great effect
of the con-
quest of the
nomad na-
tions by the
Russians.

The bloody war from 1736 to 1739, in which Marshal Munich bore so distinguished a part, and which more than repaired the disasters of Peter the Great on the Pruth, contributed in an essential manner to weaken the Turkish military power, by withdrawing from their dominion, and arraying definitively under the Russian banners, the Cossack and Nomad tribes who in former wars had proved such formidable antagonists to their arms. Since that time the Muscovite battalions no longer invade the Ottoman plains trusting to their squares of foot alone, and painfully toiling, like the legions of Crassus in ancient, or those of Peter the Great in modern times, in the midst of never-ceasing clouds of Asiatic horse. The lances of the Cossacks are now seen on their side—the nomad tribes wheel round their masses; and although the little hardy ponies on which these light-horsemen are mounted are

* Eight thousand Muscovites there perished under the Turkish scimitar; and the Vizier wrote to the Grand Seignior, that so numerous were the heads taken off the Infidel, that they would make a bridge from earth to heaven.

no match in the shock of a charge for the superb steeds of the Osmanlis, and the lance, even in the bravest hands, can hardly ward off the keen edge of the Damascus scimitar—yet, in performing the duty of videttes and scouring the country for provisions, they are decidedly their superiors. No Turkish army can now contend with the agility and address at the outposts of the Cossack horsemen; and the fate of Peter the Great on the banks of the Pruth—that of being starved out by clouds of light horse—would now perhaps befall the Turkish army which should venture to trust itself in the open plains in their presence.¹

¹ Val. 18, 19.
Von Hammer, xix. 24,
27.

Such has been the importance of this change, and of the increasing strength of the Russian and decline of the Ottoman power, that the Balkan must have been crossed and Constantinople taken long before this time, had it not been for another circumstance which, for more than half a century, has prolonged the existence of the Turkish empire. This is the desert and pestilential nature of the vast plains forming the lower part of the basin of the Danube, which have always formed the theatre of war between them and the Christian powers. The flat parts of Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as of northern Bulgaria, five-sixths of which, from the devastation of long-continued war, and the ceaseless oppression of the Turks, are in a state of nature, are exceedingly unhealthy in the autumnal months. Their low situation exposes them to frequent inundation and deluges of wet in the winter and early part of the season, which the great heats and long drought of summer dry up, and render the source of marsh *miasmata* of the most fatal kind in the close of the season. At this time vegetation is withered; the pasture for the cavalry disappears; the earth, parched and hardened, cracks in several places, and pestilential effluvia spread with the exhalations drawn up from the dried pools by the burning sun.²

52.
Importance
of the un-
healthiness
of the plain
of the
Danube in
the wars with
the Russians

² Malte Brun,
vi. 232, 233.

Upon the German troops in particular this malaria generally proved so fatal, that it cut off more than half their numbers in every campaign; and though upon the Russian constitution it was somewhat less destructive, yet it never failed to occasion greater ravages than the sword of the enemy. If these provinces were traversed by roads

53.
Which has
prolonged
the existence
of the Turk-
ish empire.

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passable for wheel carriages, it would be an easy matter to reach the foot of the Balkan range from the Russian frontier while the plains are still healthy, and the yet green herbage affords ample pasturage for the horses. But the difficulty of dragging the artillery and waggons over several hundred miles of uncultivated plains, where there are no roads, and provisions are so scanty that the army must bring its whole supplies with itself, is such, that it is hardly possible to reach the northern face of the mountains before the great heats have commenced ; and when this is done the strength of Schumla and the courage of the inhabitants of the Balkan have hitherto always arrested the invaders, till the pestilential gales of autumn obliged them to retire. Thus, in its last stage of decrepitude, Turkey has derived safety from the effects of its own devastations ; and, secure behind the desert which itself has made, has found that security in the desolation which it probably would not have done from the prosperity of its empire.¹

¹ Val. 14,
34, 40.
Jomini, Art
de la Guerre,
i. 21.

54.
Importance
of the for-
tresses on the
Danube.

The only artificial barrier, in a military point of view, which Turkey possessed on its northern frontier, was the line of the Danube, on which several fortresses stood, which, if the Ottomans had possessed the military skill of the French, would have rendered it as impervious as the Rhine to hostile invasion. Brailow, Giurgevo, Silistria, Roudschouck, Hirsova, and Widdin, besides several others of less note, constituted this formidable line of defence ; and though their fortifications would not bear a comparison with the works of Vauban and Cohorn, yet, manned by Turkish garrisons, and defended by the dagger and the scimitar, they formed a most effectual barrier. An invading army from the north found itself compelled to secure one or more of these barrier fortresses before it ventured to cross the Danube ; the desperate defence of the janissaries and inhabitants, prolonged, in almost every instance, the siege for some months, and meanwhile the season of spring and the early part of summer had passed ; the Mussulman proprietors had assembled in the great intrenched camp of Schumla ; the Balkan bristled with daring cavaliers ; and the invading army, after it had effected with toil and bloodshed its conquest of the guardian fortresses of the Danube,² found

² Val. 48, 57.
Jom. iii. 86,
387.

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itself doomed to traverse several hundred miles of open waterless plains teeming with pestilential exhalations, only to see its numbers melt in inglorious warfare at the foot of the great mountain barrier of Constantinople.

War is the natural state between the Muscovites and the Turks: the intervals of peace are only truces. The slightest cause can at any time blow up the slumbering embers into a conflagration; and if pretexts are wanting, the radical and paramount duty of destroying the Infidel is a sufficient reason, when it seems expedient on either side, for renewing hostilities. In the present instance, however, it was not the interest, as it certainly was not the wish, of the Turks, to continue hostilities, when they had been deserted by Napoleon after the conclusion of the treaty of Tilsit. They had been involved in the contest in consequence of the dispute about the appointment of the hospodars, or governors, of Wallachia and Moldavia, of which an account has already been given, and the impolitic invasion of these provinces by the Russian armies under General Michelson, in autumn 1806, on the eve of the war between Prussia and France,* and the still more injudicious and calamitous attack by the English on Egypt in spring 1807, which, without weakening their power, increased their irritation.† It has been already mentioned that the Turks—who at that period were weakened by the revolt both of the Pasha of Widdin, a strong place on the Danube, and of Czerny George, the far-famed rebel chief of Servia, who had succeeded in erecting an independent principality in that province, where he was at the head of fifty thousand men—were unable to withstand the invasion of forty thousand Russian troops on the plains of Moldavia and Wallachia; and that, accordingly, they abandoned entirely these provinces to the enemy, and prepared only to defend the line of the Danube, the fortresses of which they put in a good state of defence.‡

55.
State of
Turkey at the
opening of the
war with the
Russians in
1807.

Nov. 23,
1806.

April 22,
1807.

Val. 422.

War was formally declared by Russia against Turkey in January 1807; and although the bold and well conceived, but ill executed expedition of Sir John Duckworth against Constantinople had a powerful effect in rousing the Mahometan spirit in the empire, yet a tragical event which soon after ensued seemed again to prostrate

56.
Revolution
at Constanti-
nople.

* *Ante*, Chap. xlv. § 53. † *Ante*, Chap. xlv. § 72. ‡ *Ante*, Chap. xlv. § 58.

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its reviving strength, and expose it all but defenceless to the blows of its inveterate enemy. Sultaun Selim, an amiable and well-informed young man, had become sensible of the inveterate weakness of the Ottoman empire, and, like his more vigorous and undaunted successor, he conceived that the true remedy for these evils, and the only means of maintaining the independence of Turkey in the European commonwealth, was by gradually ingrafting on its inhabitants both the civil and military institutions of Christendom. These attempts, hazardous in some degree in all old-established countries, were in an especial manner to be dreaded in Turkey, from the political influence, as well as military power, of the numerous body of janissaries, who had contrived to engross almost all the official situations of consequence in the state. What chiefly, in the first instance, excited their jealousy was the corps of *Nizam-Jedeed*, or new troops, who were disciplined in the European method, and lodged in the principal barracks of Constantinople. They were intended, as they were well aware, to form the nucleus of a military force adequate to curb, and perhaps in the end punish, their excesses. The intrusting the forts of the Bosphorus, the gates of the capital, to these young troops, in an especial manner excited their jealousy. Emissaries from the janissary corps, unknown to the Sultaun, mingled in their ranks; the powerful body of the ulemahs, or priesthood, began to preach insurrection, upon the ground of the Sultaun aiming at the overthrow of the fundamental institutions of the Koran and the empire; and a wide-spread conspiracy was formed among the disaffected, for the destruction of the reforming Sultaun and his confidential minister, Mahmoud.¹

¹ Dumas, Pr.
His. xix. 110,
111. Jom. ii.
430, 431.

57.
Dethrone-
ment of
Sultaun
Selim, and
accession of
Mustapha.

Mahmoud was the first victim. A well-concerted conspiracy among the guards of the forts of the Bosphorus, some of whom had been won over by the janissaries, proved fatal to that minister. He was assailed by some perfidious yamacks at the moment when he ordered them to put on the uniform of the new troops, which they had declared their willingness to do. In the first instance the Sultaun's faithful guards rescued him from their hands, but it was only to meet death on the Asiatic coast, at Buyukdere, when he disembarked from a boat

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into which he had thrown himself to escape from their fury. The yamacks now every where broke out into open insurrection; the janissaries favoured them; the castles of Europe and Asia, the guardians of the Dardanelles, fell into their hands. The ulemahs declared against the Sultaun, upon the ground of his having attempted to subvert the fundamental institutions of their religion; the heads of the principal persons in Constantinople were successively brought by the ferocious bands of assassins to the square of the Etmeidan, the headquarters of the insurgents; the Sultaun himself only purchased a momentary respite, by delivering up to their fury the Bostandji-Bashi, who was particularly obnoxious; and the ferocious Cabakchy-Oglou, the chief of the rebellious yamacks, gained the entire command of the capital. After two days of bloodshed and confusion, which recalled the worst days of prætorian license, Selim was formally dethroned by the Grand Mufti, who announced to him, in person, his deposition. He was consigned to prison; at the entrance of which he met his nephew Mustapha, who was brought out thence to be placed on the throne, and whom he embraced in passing, wishing him prosperity, and commending his subjects to his care. Immediately the cannon of the castles announced the commencement of the reign of the new Sultaun; the foreign ambassadors all recognised his authority; the immense population of the city submitted with acclamations to his officers; and the unfortunate Selim, shut up in a dungeon, was soon as completely forgotten as if he had never existed.¹

June 1, 1807

¹ Dumas,
xix. 113, 117,
Jom. ii. 431,
432.

But although the revolution appeared to be thus completely successful in Constantinople, a greater degree of fidelity lingered in the breast of the troops on the Danube, and the progress of events in the capital paved the way for a second revolution. Frivolous, sensual, and apathetic, the new Sultaun, Mustapha, proved himself entirely unequal to the direction of the fearful tempest which had elevated him to the throne. Disunion soon broke out among the chiefs who had headed the revolt, whose common rapacity rendered them alike an object of horror to the people. The perfidious Mousa-Pasha, the Kaimmakam, who had been the main cause of Selim's over-

58.
Disturbances
at Constanti-
nople.

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¹ Jom. iii.
382. Dum.
xix. 123, 124.

throw, was seized, deposed, and his property confiscated; the ferocious Cabakchy-Oglou became all-powerful, and substituted in his stead Tayar Pasha, formerly Pasha of Trebizonde, who had been displaced by the former Sultaun. Tayar, however, soon showed himself not less tyrannical and rapacious than his predecessor. Prince Suzzo, the first dragoman of the Porte, was by his orders massacred at the gates of the seraglio, upon suspicion of having revealed to the ambassador of France the secret intention of the Divan to treat with England. Tayar's extortions roused the populace against him, who crowded round the gates of the seraglio demanding his head. His old ally Cabakchy yielded to the torrent, and proclaimed himself his enemy; and the tyrannical Kaimmakam, abandoned by all, was glad to escape to Roudschouck, where Mustapha Bairakdar, the commander of that place, was secretly collecting the disaffected, and fomenting a counter-revolution.¹

59.
Bairakdar
marches to
Constanti-
nople from
Roud-
schouck.

May 21, 1808.

The arrival of Tayar, and his imminent danger, determined their measures. Selecting a choice body of four thousand horse, followed by twelve thousand infantry, chiefly the new troops, who could be relied on, he crossed the Balkan to Adrianople; and, together, they marched to Constantinople, bearing with them the *Sandjak-scheriff*, or standard of Mahomet. Bairakdar combated the rebels with their own weapons. Hadgy-Ali, fortified by a firman of the Grand Vizier, surrounded the house of Cabakchy-Oglou in the night with troops, surprised him in the middle of his harem, and cut off his head, which he sent to Bairakdar. The cries of the women of the harem having alarmed the neighbourhood, the yamacks assembled to arms; disregarding the firman of the Grand Vizier, they attacked and overthrew the handful of troops with which Hadgy-Ali had destroyed Cabakchy-Oglou, and shut them up in some houses, to which they set fire. The intrepid Ali, however, sallied forth sword in hand, cut his way through the besiegers, and threw himself into one of the castles of the Bosphorus, from whence, after being vainly besieged by the yamacks for three days, he made his way to the victorious army of the Grand Vizier, now at the gates of Constantinople.²

² Dumas, xix.
123, 126.
Jom. iii. 382,
383.

At the entrance of the capital Bairakdar made known

his conditions to Sultaun Mustapha, viz., that he should exile the Grand Mufti, and disband the yamacks. Too happy to extricate himself from such a crisis by these concessions, the Sultaun at once agreed. Bairakdar feigned entire satisfaction, and the deluded sovereign resumed with undiminished zest his favourite amusements. But the undaunted pasha of Roudschouck had deeper designs in view. A few days after, learning that the Grand Seignior had gone to pass the day with the ladies of his harem at one of his kiosks, or country residences, he put himself at the head of a chosen body of troops, and, as the Grand Vizier hesitated to accompany him, violently tore from his hands the seals of office, made himself master of the *Sandjak-scheriff*, and, preceded by that revered standard, marched to the seraglio to dethrone the reigning Sultaun, and restore the captive Selim. The outer gates of the palace flew open at the sight of the sacred ensign; but the bostandjis at the inner gates opposed so firm a resistance, that time was afforded for the Sultaun to return by a back way, and regain his private apartments. Meanwhile, Bairakdar's troops thundered at the gates, and loudly demanded that Selim should instantly be restored to them, and seated on the throne. To gain time, Mustapha's adherents feigned compliance; but, meanwhile, he himself gave orders that Selim should be strangled in prison. The order was immediately executed, and the dead body of the unhappy Sultaun thrown into the court to Bairakdar's troops. Pierced to the heart, the faithful Bairakdar threw himself on his master's remains, which he bedewed with his tears. In a transport of rage he ordered the officers of the seraglio to be brought before him and instantly executed. Sultaun Mustapha was dethroned, and shut up in the same prison from which Selim had just been brought to execution; and his younger brother MAHMOUD, the last of the royal and sacred race, put on the throne.

It might have been supposed that this bloody catastrophe would have terminated these frightful revolutions; but fortune was not yet weary of exhibiting on this dark stage the mutability of human affairs. Bairakdar, as the just reward of his fidelity and courage, was created Grand Vizier, and for some months the machine of government

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60.

Fresh revolution. Deposition of Mustapha. Death of Selim, and accession of Mahmoud. May 21, 1808.

1 Dumas, xix.
124, 130.
Jom. iii. 383,
384.

61.

A third revolution.

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went on smoothly and quietly ; but it was soon discovered that Sultaun Mahmoud was not less determined to reform the national institutions than Selim had been ; that to this disposition he joined an inflexibility of character, which rendered him incomparably more formidable ; and that the great capacity of the Grand Vizier rendered it highly probable that their projects would soon be carried into complete execution. The jealousy of the janissaries was again awakened. A large portion of the army which had overthrown Sultaun Mustapha, had been withdrawn to make head against the Russians on the Danube ; and the opportunity seemed favourable for again assailing the new order of things. The ulemahs, the mufti, and the leaders of the disaffected, again organised an insurrection, and it broke out in the middle of November.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1808, 237,
238. Jom. iii.
383, 384.

62.
Death of
Bairakdar.

Notwithstanding all the precautions which Mahmoud and the Grand Vizier Bairakdar could take, the party of the janissaries on this occasion proved victorious. A furious multitude of these haughty prætorians surrounded the noble barracks of the new troops, set fire to them, and consumed several hundreds in the conflagration ; while another body directed their steps to the palace of the Grand Vizier, and a third to the seraglio itself. Four thousand chosen guards defended the Sultaun, and defeated all the efforts of the insurgents at that point ; but the few faithful defenders of the Grand Vizier were driven into his palace, to which the savage multitude immediately set fire ; and the heroic Bairakdar, to shorten his sufferings, himself set fire to a powder magazine, which he had provided as a last resource against his enemies, and, with his whole household, was blown into the air.²

² Ann. Reg.
1808, 238.
Jom. iii. 383,
384.

63.
And of Mus-
tapha, and
triumph of
the janis-
saries.

Indignant at these scenes of horror, Sultaun Mahmoud gave orders for his troops to sally forth from the seraglio, and others from the adjoining forts of the Bosphorus to enter the town ; and Constantinople immediately became the theatre of general bloodshed, massacre, and conflagration. The insurgents set fire to every quarter of which they obtained possession, to augment the confusion ; and men, women, and children perished alike by the sword or in the flames. At length, after forty-eight hours of continued combat and unceasing horror, the party of the janissaries prevailed : great part of the new troops perished

by their hands; the remainder surrendered; and the Sultaun, who had previously strangled his rival Mustapha in prison, was compelled to purchase peace by the sacrifice of all his ministers who were bent on the new order of things. Yet even in these moments of victorious insurrection, the force of old attachment and long-established loyalty to the sacred race was apparent. Mahmoud, the last of the race of Othman, with which the existence of the empire was thought to be wound up, became the object of veneration even to the rebels who had subverted his government; and he reigned in safety, with despotic power, by the support of the very faction who would have consigned him to the dungeon, and probably the bowstring, had his imprisoned relative survived to be elevated to the throne.¹

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¹ Jom. iii.
383, 385.
Ann. Reg.
1808, 238.

In these sanguinary tumults, the great bulk of the people remained in a state of passive indifference, ready to submit implicitly to either of the factions which might prove victorious in the strife. The contest lay between the ulemahs, the mufti, and the janissaries on the one side, and the court and officers of state, with such of the new troops as they had organised, on the other. The multitude took no part in the combat till the insurgents roused their passions by the hope of plunder or the sight of conflagration. Like the Parisian populace, on occasion of the contests for power between the club of Clichy and the bayonets of Augereau in 1797, or the grenadiers of Napoleon and the Council of the Five Hundred,* they submitted in silence to power which they could not resist, and avoided a contest in which they had no interest. Years of revolution had produced the same result in the metropolis of France which centuries of despotism had done in that of Turkey; and in the social conflicts which convulsed the state, fanaticism and tyranny in the east produced as great prostration in the multitude, and almost as great atrocities in the victorious bands, as infidelity and democracy had done in the west of Europe.²

64.
Passive indifference of the people during these disorders.

² Dumas,
xix. 129.

These repeated convulsions at Constantinople proved highly injurious to the Ottoman cause in the field of diplomacy, because they gave Napoleon, as already noticed, a pretext at the treaty of Tilsit for holding

* *Ante*, Chap. xxiv. § 49; and Chap. xxix. § 48.

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65.
Napoleon's
desertion of
the Turks in
the treaty of
Tilsit.

out, as he did, that his engagements were with Sultaun Selim; that he was under no obligation to keep faith with the ferocious rabble who had overthrown his government, and consigned himself to a dungeon; and that the Turks had now proved themselves a mere horde of barbarians, who could no longer be tolerated in Europe. It was one of the conditions, accordingly, of the treaty of Tilsit, that France should offer its mediation to effect an adjustment of the differences between Russia and the Sublime Porte; and that, in the event of the latter declining the terms arranged between Alexander and Napoleon, she was to be jointly attacked by them both. Russia was to be at entire liberty to annex Wallachia, Moldavia, and Bulgaria to her empire; while Macedonia, Thrace, Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago, were to be allotted to the French Emperor, who immediately commenced inquiries and surveys as to his share in the partition.* By such shameful desertion of his ally did Napoleon requite the Turks for the fidelity with which they had stood by his side, when the British squadron under Sir J. Duckworth threatened Constantinople with destruction, and, if more energetically led, might have effected it.

66.

Causes which
deferred seri-
ous opera-
tions till
spring 1809.

Russia, however, had other and more pressing objects of ambition nearer home, which were also amply provided for by the treaty of Tilsit. The situation of her principal armies in the north of Poland, pointed them out as immediately deserving of attention; and the conquerors of Eylau defiled in great and irresistible strength through St Petersburg, on their route for Finland. The prosecution of the war in that province,—long the object of desire to the cabinet of St Petersburg,—which will immediately be considered, rendered the Russian government unwilling to engage in hostilities at the same time on the Danube; and the Turks, distracted by the cruel dissensions at Constantinople, were too happy to prolong a negotiation which might relieve them during their agonies from the Muscovite battalions. But the war in Finland having terminated, as might have been expected, by the annexation of that province to the Russian dominions, and peace having been concluded,

Nov. 1808.

* *Ante*, Chap. xlv. § 78; where the clause of partition is quoted.

as will immediately be detailed, with the court of Stockholm, the Czar turned his ambitious eyes to the Turkish dominions. Napoleon formally abandoned the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia to the conquest of his powerful northern ally; the army on the Danube was reinforced by sixty battalions; and orders were sent to its commander, Prince Prozorowsky, to cross that river and carry the war with vigour into the heart of the Turkish territories.¹

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March 16,
1809.

¹ Jom. iii.
385, 386.
Val. 44, 45.

The Russians, however, were far from reaping that benefit from the distractions of the Ottoman empire, and their own surpassing strength, which might have been anticipated. Prozorowsky, though an able general, was little acquainted with the very peculiar mode of war required in Turkish warfare, where the enemy's infantry throw themselves into fortresses, which they defend with desperate courage to the last extremity; and their horse, scouring in vast multitudes a desert and unhealthy country, disappear upon a reverse, and again assemble in undiminished strength if a farther advance by the enemy is attempted. His force was very great—one hundred and twenty-five battalions, ninety-five squadrons, and ten thousand Cossacks, presented a total of eighty thousand infantry and twenty-five thousand horse, to which the Turks, severely weakened by their internal dissensions, and by the defection of Czerny George, who had declared for the Russians, had no force to oppose which was capable of keeping the field.²

67.
Forces of the
Russians for
the invasion
of Turkey.

² Val. 44, 45.

They wisely, therefore, confined themselves to throwing strong garrisons into the fortresses on the Danube, and directed their principal forces against Servia, where their undisciplined militia were more likely to meet with antagonists in the field over whom they had a chance of prevailing. This plan proved entirely successful. Sultaun Mahmoud succeeded in rousing the military spirit of the Ottoman population in European Turkey; and eighty thousand Turks, to whom Czerny George could only oppose thirty thousand mountaineers, soon compelled him to recede from Nizza, to which he had advanced, to retire with loss behind the Morava, and finally to take refuge under the cannon of Belgrade. A corps of Russians now advanced from the north to the

68.
Plan of the
Turkish
operations,
and their suc-
cess against
Czerny
George.

May 1809

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1809.

July 1808.

† Jom. ii.
388, 389.
Val. 44, 45.

support of their Servian allies, and in some degree changed the face of affairs. The Ottomans, on the side of Bosnia, which held out for the Grand Seignior, were driven back into their own territories, but still their Grand Army kept possession of the greater part of Servia, and threatened Belgrade; and it was evident, that unless a powerful diversion was effected on the Lower Danube, the campaign would terminate entirely to the advantage of the Turks.¹

69.
The Russians
are repulsed
before Giur-
gevo and
Brahilow.
May 19.

Prozorowsky's first enterprise was against Giurgevo, near the mouth of the Danube; and, ignorant of the quality of the enemy with whom he had to deal, as well as misled by the successful issue of the assault of Ismael and Oczakoff in former days, he ventured to attempt carrying it by escalade. A bloody repulse, in which he lost two thousand men, taught him his error. Abandoning his presumptuous attempt, the Russian general next invested Brahilow, on the right bank of the river, and began to batter its mouldering walls with heavy cannon, though without going through the form of regular approaches. Deeming it practicable to carry the place by escalade before the walls were breached, an assault was attempted in that manner; but the steady valour and deadly aim of the Mussulmans who manned the ramparts, again baffled all the efforts of the Muscovite infantry, and they were repulsed with the loss of above seven thousand men. To conceal these disasters, the Russian general now converted the siege into a mere blockade, crossed the Danube at Galacz, and openly proclaimed his resolution to carry the war to the foot of the Balkan. But this operation was not prosecuted with any activity; and the Turks, emboldened by their success at Giurgevo and Brahilow, ventured, under the Grand Vizier, to cross the Danube at the former of these towns, and began to ravage the plains of Moldavia.²

June 6.

June 14.

Aug. 2.

Aug. 4.
2 Jom. iii.
389, 390.
Val. 45, 46.

70.
The blockade
of Silistria is
raised by the
Grand Vizier,
but Brahilow
falls.

Meanwhile, Prozorowsky died, and he was succeeded in the command by Bagrathion, who, in order to draw back the Turks from their incursion on the northern bank of the river, immediately advanced against Silistria, the most important fortress on the whole northern frontier. But the Turks having thrown fifteen thousand men into that stronghold, the Russian general did not deem himself

in sufficient force to undertake the siege of a place of such strength so defended, and therefore confined himself to a simple blockade, in maintaining which his troops suffered most severely from the unhealthiness of its environs in the autumnal months. The Grand Vizier, however, alarmed for a fortress of such importance, at length recrossed the Danube, and detached fifteen thousand men to beat up the enemy's quarters in its vicinity, in the end of October. Bagrathion advanced against this body, and an action, with no decisive result, ensued at Tartaritzza, in which, however, it soon appeared that the Russians had been worsted; for Bagrathion immediately recrossed the Danube, and raised the blockade. Ismael, however, which had been long blockaded, surrendered on the 21st September; and Bagrathion, after so many reverses, succeeded in throwing a radiance over the conclusion of the campaign by the reduction of Brahilow, which had been long invested on both banks of the river. and surrendered by capitulation, from want of provisions, in the end of November. This success gave the Russians the great advantage of a solid fortress, which secured their passage of the Danube.¹

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Sept. Oct.

Nov. 3.

Sept. 21.

¹ Val. 45, 47.
Jom. iii. 389,
390.

The Swedish war in 1808, and the Austrian one of 1809, had operated as important diversions in favour of the Ottoman forces; but in the beginning of 1810, the cabinet of St Petersburg resolved to carry on their operations with much greater vigour against the Turks, fearful lest the present favourable opportunity afforded by the conclusion of the peace with Napoleon should glide away, without its having been turned to due advantage by their completing the conquests agreed to by him from the Ottomans. In the beginning of the year, accordingly, an imperial ukase appeared, formally annexing Moldavia and Wallachia, which for three years had been occupied by their troops, to the Russian empire, and declaring the Danube, from the Austrian frontier to the sea, the southern European boundary of their mighty dominion. This decisive step was immediately followed up by the most extensive military preparations. The Muscovite army on the Danube was augmented to a hundred and ten thousand men, of whom thirty thousand were horse.² Bagrathion, whose checkered success had been far from answering the expectations of the

71.
Annexation
of Wallachia
and Moldavia
to Russia,
and opening
of the cam-
paign of 1810.

Jan. 21, 1810.

² Val. 64, 88.
Jom. iii. 464.

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cabinet of St Petersburg, was replaced by Kamenskoi,* a general, learned, brave, and in the flower of his age; but by no means possessing experience in Turkish warfare adequate to the difficult task with which he was intrusted.

72.
Russian plan
of the cam-
paign of 1810.

Seeing himself at the head of so great a force, and desirous to signalise the commencement of his command by decisive success, he resolved to divide his troops into two parts; and while with the left he himself advanced by Hirsova to Schumla, the right was to lay siege to Silistria and Roudschouck, and the lesser fortresses on the Danube, so as to become master of the whole line of that important stream. The project was well conceived, as it offered the important advantage of crossing the plains and barren hills between the Danube and the Balkan before the unhealthy heats commenced, and when the yet green herbage afforded ample subsistence for the horses of the army. But it failed from not sufficiently estimating the desperate valour of the Turks in the defence of fortified places, which has so often rendered abortive the best-laid plans for the subversion of the Ottoman empire.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
464, 465.
Val. 64, 68.

73.
Great trade
of the English
up the
Danube into
Germany.

During the winter, a sort of tacit armistice, attended by very singular effects, prevailed between the two armies. Though the Russians were masters of many batteries on the left bank of the Danube, and, by their possession of Brahilow, had the command of its principal mouth, yet, during the whole winter of 1809-10, they made no attempt to obstruct the navigation of that river; the Turkish and Austrian vessels continued to ply upon it as during a period of profound peace, and English goods to an enormous amount were conveyed up the stream, paid duties to the pasha of Widdin, and were carried through the Rothenbourg, on men's heads and horses' backs, into Hungary, and thence through the whole of Germany. The secret cause of this extraordinary traffic was to be found in the Continental System of Napoleon, then in full activity in northern Europe, which had so immensely enhanced the price of all kinds of British merchandise, that the vast

* Son of the general of the same name, who commanded the Russians in the commencement of the Polish war in 1807, and went mad during the first retreat from the Vistula.—*Ante*, Chap. xliv. § 28.

profits of the merchants who were fortunate enough to get any introduced, enabled them to bribe the authorities in all the different countries through which they passed to wink at the transit of the goods, even in direct violation of the engagements of their respective sovereigns. Thus, at the very time that the French Emperor flattered himself that, by the treaty of Tilsit, and the accession of the Russian Autocrat to the continental coalition, he had closed the last inlets against the introduction of English manufactures to the Continent, the generals of the very power he had subdued were conniving at the system against which he had made such strenuous efforts, and found in their conquests the means of extending it: a striking proof of the extreme difficulty, even with the greatest power, of extinguishing that mutual intercourse which arises out of the wants, and grows with the happiness of mankind.¹

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The right wing of the Russians crossed the Danube, in the middle of March, at Casemir, between Roudschouck and Widdin; but it was not till the middle of May that the left wing entered upon the campaign, and advanced to Bazarjik. Meanwhile the Grand Vizier, Kara-Yusuf Pasha, already known by his defence of Acre against Napoleon,* had been indefatigable in his endeavours to accumulate and discipline a formidable force in the great intrenched camp of SCHUMLA, and to strengthen the numerous redoubts by which it is defended; but when the Russians approached, he cautiously kept his still ill-disciplined host within their ramparts. Kamenskoi immediately laid siege to Bazarjik, which, after a short siege and the capture of eight hundred of its garrison in an unfortunate sortie, was carried by assault, in the beginning of June, with two thousand prisoners.²

74.
First operations of the campaign of 1810.

June 3.
² Val. 68, 70.
Jom. iii. 465.

The Russians, who were sixty thousand strong on the Lower Danube, finding no enemy to oppose them in the field, divided their forces; and while the main body, under Kamenskoi in person, advanced towards the Balkan, Langeron, with his corps, was despatched to besiege Silistria, and lesser bodies were sent against Tourtoukai and Rasgrad. Langeron proved entirely successful: in seven

75.
Fall of Silistria, and advance of the Russians to Schumla.

* *Ante*, Chap. xxvi. § 82.

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June 10.
June 13.

June 17.

June 22.

¹ Jom. iii.
465. Val. 68,
71.76.
Description
of Schumla.

days after he appeared before its walls, Silistria, one of the strongest places on the Danube, surrendered by capitulation, though the sap was still one hundred and eighty yards from the ditch, on condition only of the garrison and inhabitants retiring where they chose; while Tourtukai and Rasgrad yielded soon after to the terrors of a bombardment. The successes, which proved that a golden key, or favourable conditions to the inhabitants, could sometimes be as effectual as an iron one, or force, in opening the Turkish gates, encouraged the commander-in-chief, without awaiting the issue of the operations of his right wing against Roudschouek, to advance towards Schumla; and he appeared, accordingly, on the 22d June, with forty thousand men in front of that celebrated stronghold, hitherto the *ne plus ultra* of Muscovite advance towards Constantinople.¹

Schumla, which in all the wars between Russia and Turkey, has been a place of the highest importance, is a considerable town, situated on the northern slope of the Balkan, where the great road from Belgrade and Bucharest to Constantinople begins to ascend the slopes of the mountains. To the traveller who approaches it from the open and desert hills extending southward from the Danube, it exhibits the appearance of a triangular sheet of vast extent spread over the hollow of the mountains, and extending up the heights on either side; not unlike the distant view of Algiers as seen rising from the waves of the Mediterranean. Thirty thousand industrious inhabitants fill its streets with animation, and a clear torrent descending through its centre, secures both to them and the inmates of the intrenched camp, which extends far beyond their dwellings, an ample supply of the indispensable element of water. The town cannot be said to be regularly fortified, even though its position, at the point of intersection of the principal roads which cross the Balkan from north to south, renders it a strategical point of the very highest importance; and it is overhung, in rear, by a succession of eminences, which rise one above another till they are lost in the woody thickets of Mount Hæmus. But these heights, of difficult access, and covered with thick brushwood, are entirely inaccessible to European cavalry and artillery; the vast

circuit of the intrenched camp renders it almost impossible to invest or blockade its circumference; supplies are thus introduced with ease from the rear; and though the redoubts consist only of a ditch and rampart of clay, and they are placed merely on the commanding points, leaving often a space several hundred yards broad open without any defence, yet in the hands of the Turks and janissaries they constituted a most efficient barrier. In 1744, these field-works had withstood the utmost efforts of the Russians, under Marshal Romanzoff; and at this time, when they were garrisoned by Yusuf Pasha, the defender of Acre, with thirty thousand chosen troops, who had employed months in clearing out and strengthening them, it seemed an undertaking beyond the strength even of Kamenskoi's army to effect their conquest.¹

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¹ Malte Brun,
vi. 238.
Walsh, 158.
Clarke's
Travels, viii.
241. Val. 49.

The Russian general commenced his operations on his own right, in order to turn the Turkish camp, and, establishing himself on the heights in its rear, interpose between the Grand Vizier and Constantinople. He succeeded in placing a division on these rugged and wood-clad eminences; but the difficulty of dragging artillery up such broken ravines, and the danger of risking a large part of the army in a position where, if defeated, it would be deprived of a retreat to the Danube, deterred him from establishing himself in that important position. Several inconsiderable actions took place, particularly at the heights of the Grotto, in the rear of Schumla, and the Russians were entirely masters of the road from that town to Constantinople; but the investment was never complete. A large convoy of provisions was introduced into the Turkish camp soon after the blockade began, notwithstanding the utmost vigilance of the besiegers; the desperate valour of the janissaries rendered the contest for every thicket or rocky eminence a scene of blood, in which the assailants generally lost more men than the enemy; the strength of the works in front to the north of the town, precluded the hope of a successful assault; and, after several weeks spent in fruitless efforts, Kamenskoi was obliged to renounce his enterprise.² To cover the disgrace of an open retreat, he left thirty thousand men, under his brother,

77.
Unsuccessful
operations
against
Schumla.

June 24.

July 7.

July 12.
² Jom. iii.
465, 466.
Val. 77, 93.

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to continue a distant blockade, and himself hastened, with twelve thousand choice troops, to co-operate in the siege of ROUDSCHOUCK.

78.
Preparations
for the assault
of Rouds-
chouck.

This fortress, which became justly celebrated by the murderous assault which followed, is a Turkish town containing thirty thousand inhabitants, with a single rampart and wet ditch, but without either bastions, counterescarps, glacis, or outworks, like the other Turkish fortresses, which have already been described. It did not possess more powerful means of defence than Brailow, nor so much as Silistria; but every defect was supplied by the resources of the governor, HASSAN PASHA, the Bosniak Aga, a man of cool judgment and invincible resolution. He was at the head of a garrison of seven thousand men, and his example had roused the whole male population of the place capable of bearing arms, nearly as numerous, to the determination of unflinching resistance in defence of their hearths and their liberty. When Kamenskoi joined the besieging force, its numbers were raised to above twenty thousand men; and, as the rampart was in part ruined, though it could hardly be said that a practicable breach had been effected, an assault was ordered. Every effort was made to animate the soldiers; Kamenskoi himself, in full uniform, rode through the ranks, speaking to the men on the exploits of their regiments in former times, and animating their courage for the decisive assault which was approaching. The clergy joined in the efforts to animate the men; and the attack was ordered on the 3d August—a day then held in peculiar veneration in Russia, from being the fête-day of the Empress Mother.¹

¹ Val. 98,
101. Jom. iii.
466.

79.
Dreadful de-
feat of the
assault.
Aug. 3.

Hassan Pasha, from the time that the cannon of the besiegers had begun to rattle against his walls, had not returned a shot; and from this circumstance, the younger Russian soldiers flattered themselves that very little resistance was to be anticipated; while the veterans feared, from long experience, that he was only reserving his whole strength for the decisive moment of assault. During the whole preceding night a vehement fire was kept up from all the batteries, and at daybreak the troops advanced to the attack in five massy columns, one of which was charged with mounting the breach, while

the others were to endeavour to effect a diversion by escalading the rampart in those situations where it was still uninjured. The Muscovites advanced with their wonted steadiness to the assault, and soon reached the foot of the scarp; but it was immediately found that the Pasha's previous silence had arisen neither from terror nor inattention. From every roof, window, and loophole that could bear upon the assailants, a dreadful fire issued the moment that they came within range: the parapet and the *terre-pleine* were lined with undaunted Mussulmans, who opened a well-sustained discharge upon the enemy; and the troops, staggered by the severity of the fire, recoiled from the foot of the rampart, and began from the opposite side of the fosse to exchange musket-shots with their visible and invisible antagonists. In vain the officers, wearied of this fruitless butchery, leaped into the ditch, mounted the scaling-ladders, and reached the summit of the rampart. In that exposed situation they were speedily cut off by the Turkish scimitars; and two columns, which the besieged permitted to enter, were almost entirely destroyed by the dreadful attack of the janissaries, armed with their daggers and sabres. At noon the Turkish flag still waved on all the minarets; and it was not till six at night that the commander-in-chief reluctantly sounded a retreat, leaving eight thousand killed and wounded in the ditch and around the walls, of whom four thousand were immediately decapitated by their valiant, but, in this respect, ruthless enemies.^{1*}

¹ Val. 101,
103. Jom. iii
466.

This dreadful repulse wellnigh prostrated the strength of the besiegers, and necessarily disabled them from attempting any thing beyond an ineffectual blockade; and if the Grand Vizier at Schumla had taken advantage of it, to sally forth with all his forces and harass the enemy, the result probably would have been, that the Russians at all points would have been driven across the Danube. But, with true Turkish apathy, he remained

80.
Operations
which follow-
ed this defeat.

* A circumstance characteristic of the Russian armies at this period occurred at this assault. Many soldiers, under pretence of being wounded, as usual in similar cases, strayed from the scene of danger, and got into the rear: Kamenskoi caused them all to be examined, and such as were unhurt were sent back to their posts *with strokes of the whip*. This laborious operation consumed a considerable time, which might have been more profitably employed in pushing forward the assault.—VAL. 104.

CHAP.
LXIX.1810.
Aug. 7.

quiet where he was, without attempting any thing serious, and thus Kamenskoi gained a precious breathing-time to repair his disasters. A sally, a few days afterwards, by the Grand Vizier, near Schumla, was repulsed with the loss of three thousand men, though the victory was far from being bloodless to the Russians, who lost above half that number. Intimidated by these disasters, they soon afterwards raised the investment of Schumla, and retired to Bazarjik and the Danube: while Kamenskoi himself, from numerical weakness, was obliged to abandon the island in the Danube which he had occupied opposite Roudschouck, which was immediately occupied by the besieged, who destroyed the works erected there, so that their communication with the country was in a great degree restored. Nevertheless, the Russians, with great perseverance, still kept their ground before the fortress on the north bank of the Danube; and an opportunity soon occurred of striking an important blow.¹

¹ Jom. iii.
466. Val.
102, 107.

81.
Operations of
the Seraskier
of Sophia for
the raising of
the siege.

The Divan ordered the Beglerbeg, or viceroy, of Roumelia, a considerable potentate in European Turkey, recently appointed Seraskier, or commander-in-chief of his province, to assemble a force for the deliverance of Roudshouck, the pasha of which was now making the most vehement representations of his inability to continue the defence much longer if he was not relieved, as his provisions were nearly exhausted.* For this purpose the Seraskier assembled a body of thirty thousand men on the river Jantra, at the distance of about forty miles from the fortress. Sensible, however, that his troops, which were for the most part mere undisciplined militia, would be wholly unable to withstand the Russian army in the open field, he took post on the river near BATTIN, and, after the Turkish fashion, immediately proceeded to fortify his camp. Its situation was well selected, being a half-deserted plain at the confluence of the Jantra and the Danube, with a few fruit-trees scattered over its surface, and watered on two sides by those ample streams. When seen from a distance, this surface appeared level, but on a nearer approach it was discovered

* "We have almost lost our eyesight in straining to see the columns approaching to deliver us. Our loss already amounts to six thousand men; and we have only provisions for ten days."—*The Bosniak Aga to the Grand Vizier*, August 12, 1810; VAL. 107.

to be intersected by several rocky ravines. Two of these fissures, which were impassable even for foot-soldiers, defended the sides of the camp, which rested on the Danube near the confluence of the two rivers in rear; while the neck of land which lay between them, and by which alone access could be obtained to its interior, strengthened by two redoubts, was covered, in the interval between them, with thick bushes and underwood. In them the janissary light infantry would have a decided superiority over the Russian tirailleurs, and through their intricacies it would be difficult for the latter to bring up their numerous artillery to counterbalance this disadvantage. Nevertheless, Kamenskoi, desirous to wipe off the disgrace of the repulse at Roudschouck, and fearful of the approach of Ali Pasha, the far-famed ruler of Albania, who with his hardy mountaineers was slowly approaching, at the summons of the Grand Seignior, to co-operate against the Russians, resolved to hazard an attack.¹

¹ Val. 110,
115. Jom. iii.
467.

For this purpose, having previously strengthened the besieging force before Roudschouck with half of the forces which had been withdrawn from Schumla, and detached General Kulneff with a division of six thousand men to reconnoitre the Turkish camp, and prevent them from foraging beyond its limits, the general-in-chief set out from the environs of Roudschouck with twelve thousand men, and, following the right bank of the river, appeared in front of the Turkish intrenchments. They appeared to be so strong, that notwithstanding the Russian superiority, especially in artillery, of which they had a hundred pieces, it was deemed impracticable to hazard an attack in front, at least unless strongly supported by simultaneous operations on either flank. The enemy, it was soon discovered, had two intrenched camps, the works of which mutually supported each other, and their guns were so disposed as completely to command in rear the navigation of the Danube, on which they had also a powerful flotilla destined for the relief of Roudschouck. The only practicable way of reaching them that remained, was by an attack in flank, near the village of Battin, where the ravine, though steep and rugged, was practicable for foot-soldiers; while as heavy a fire as possible was opened on the intrenched camp in front nearest the

82.
Kamenskoi's
plan of at-
tack on the
Turkish
camp.
Aug. 27.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1810.

Aug. 27.

Sept. 4.
1 Val. 115,
125.83.
Battle of
Battin.
Sept. 7.

isthmus, from an eminence which had been with great judgment seized and strengthened by the Cossacks. Meanwhile, strong reinforcements were ordered up under Woinoff from Silistria; and as a strong reconnoissance under Kulneff on the front of the enemy's position, with the troops in square, had led to no advantage, and was attended with considerable loss, Kamenskoi made every effort to collect troops from all quarters; and Woinoff having at length come up with five thousand men, the grand attack was fixed for the 7th September.¹

The battle commenced at daybreak. Kamenskoi himself, at the head of the whole cavalry, advanced to within cannon-shot of the principal camp; while another column, composed of infantry, moved up in squares to the front of the lesser one, and Kulneff with the left was despatched to the other side of the ravine, which formed the western defence of the Turkish position. But the latter general did not arrive at the point of attack assigned to him till considerably after the time calculated on, which led to the discomfiture of the Russians on the first day. Kamenskoi himself with the centre stormed the principal heights which commanded one of the intrenched camps, though with great loss, and put all the Turks who defended them to the sword. But Kulneff failed in his attack on the left from the side of the ravine, and though one of his columns succeeded in penetrating into the camp, yet it was immediately cut to pieces by the Turkish scimitars: while on the right the brave Illowolski, who conducted the assault on the other intrenched camp, was mortally wounded on the edge of the ditch, and the most forward of his followers who crossed it left their heads in the hands of the Turks, who fought like desperadoes. Thus the attack failed on both flanks, though a most important advantage had been gained in the centre. Upon this Kamenskoi desisted from further attempts for the night; merely retaining the important heights which he himself had won, and concentrated his troops as much as possible in that quarter, while Kulneff got under shelter in the bottom of the rocky ravine which he had crossed.²

2 Val. 124.
127.

The Turkish camps were now completely surrounded by the Muscovite troops, and many of the imperial

CHAP.
LXIX.

1810.

84.

Plan for the
renewal of the
battle.

generals, seeing the desperate manner in which they had been defended on the preceding day, strongly recommended the general-in-chief to make a bridge of gold for a retiring enemy, and withdraw Kulneff's divisions from the ravine during the night, so as to leave them a retreat up the course of the Danube. The Turks also, elated by their success, gave way to every demonstration of joy; and in sight of both armies, went through the barbarous operation, on the top of their intrenchments, of decapitating the Russians who had been left on the field.* But Kamenskoi was resolute: orders were given to renew the attack at daybreak, the principal effort being directed against the gorge of the camps, where the works, owing to the natural strength of the ravines in their rear, were least formidable. Kulneff, who had had a violent altercation with the general-in-chief, was put under arrest, and the command of his troops given to Sabanejef. The whole artillery was brought to bear on the enemy's camp; that on Kamenskoi's heights firing down from above, that of Sabanejef being pointed up from the ravine below, so as to throw the howitzers upwards into the intrenchments.¹

¹ Val. 129.

The attack of Sabanejef proved entirely successful. After encountering a vigorous opposition, his troops, gallantly led by their general, made their way into the camp to which he was opposed; but the Turks, seeing their position no longer tenable, adopted and bravely executed a most extraordinary resolution. Suddenly assembling the whole of his cavalry and the bravest of his infantry, Muktar Pasha, abandoning his camp and all its contents, poured out by one of the gates like a torrent, and making straight across the plateau, sought the shelter of the ravine on the right, which was not occupied by the Russians in any force. The unlooked-for deluge had wellnigh swept away Kamenskoi himself, who was moving at the time from the left to the centre, in order to direct an attack on the front of the camp. For a considerable time this singular evacuation remained unknown to the

85.

Ultimate
victory of the
Russians.
Sept. 8.

* The Prince de Ligne observed, regarding this practice of the Turks, of cutting off the heads of the wounded or prisoners, that it was "more formidable in appearance than reality; for it could do no harm to the dead; it was often a relief to the wounded; and it was rather an advantage to the unhurt, as it left them no chance of escape but in victory."—VAL. 69.

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1810.

Russian centre, who, seeing the standards of Mahomet still floating on the intrenchments, and a multitude of foot-soldiers on the rampart firing vehemently, and shouting "Allah!" deemed the tumult owing only to a partial sally from the works. But at length they too left the rampart; its fire gradually died away; the standards alone remained on the summit; and the fact becoming known, the Russians on all sides poured with loud shouts into the enclosure, and with savage revenge, excited by the Turkish cruelty to the prisoners, put all they still found within to the sword. The guns on the intrenchments were instantly turned against the flying swarms of Ottomans, and the Russian cavalry quickly pursuing, came up even with their horse, and did considerable mischief. But the decisive trophies of the victory were, the principal camp of the Ottomans, with fourteen guns and two hundred standards; the whole flotilla which lay in the Danube, laden with provisions and ammunition for the relief of Roudschouck; and five thousand men, who in the lesser camp were obliged to surrender as prisoners of war, with Achmet Pasha, the second in command. The brave Seraskier had died the same day of his wounds.¹

Val. 129,
133. Jom. iii.
467.

86.
Capitulation
of Rouds-
chouck.
Sept. 12.

The immediate consequence of this great victory was the capture of Sistowa, a fortified place on the Danube, in the neighbourhood, which surrendered a few days afterwards, with the whole Turkish flotilla which had taken refuge under its walls. Meanwhile, Count Langeron, with the troops at Roudschouck now considerably reinforced, was pressing the siege of that fortress with the utmost possible activity; and had made himself master of the island in the Danube, which forms the point of communication between it and the fortress of Giurgevo, situated on the opposite bank. Seeing the commander of the latter place, which was the weaker of the two, thus separated from his colleague, Langeron summoned him to surrender; but the reply was in the true laconic style: "Giurgevo is not yet swimming in its blood." The Bosniak Aga, however, seeing the flotilla on which his whole hopes of relief were fixed captured, became sensible of the necessity of coming to terms of accommodation. But the conqueror of Battin, elated with his recent success, and the effects of a similar severity

to Achmet Pasha, refused any terms but those of absolute surrender ; upon which the proud Turk declared he would die in the breach first. The intelligence, however, which the Russian general received shortly after, of the elevation of Bernadotte to the rank of crown-prince and heir-apparent of Sweden, coupled with accounts of the sacred standard having been unfurled at Constantinople, induced him to relax from this ill-timed rigour ; and by the intervention of Count Langeron, a capitulation was at length agreed on, in the end of September, in virtue of which the pasha was permitted to retire with his whole troops and the inhabitants, leaving only the walls, cannon, standards, and military stores to the Russians. These conditions, the fair reward of his heroic defence, were so favourable, that the Bosniak Aga would probably have willingly acceded to them in the beginning of the siege ; and the Pasha of Giurgevo immediately after capitulated on the same favourable terms.¹

CHAP.
LXIX.

1810.

Sept. 26.

Sept. 28.
¹ Jom. iii.
467. Val.
135, 139.

Though the Russians had thus made themselves masters of these important strongholds on the Danube, yet the obstinate resistance of the Bosniak Aga had entirely ruined their designs for the campaign. The rainy season had now set in ; the evacuation of Roudschouck, which the Turks prolonged as much as possible, took nearly a month ; Kamenskoi did not consider it safe to undertake any other enterprise till he was finally rid of his formidable antagonist. Even when the Russians were put entirely in possession of the fortress in the end of October, they got nothing but half-ruined walls and a deserted town, tenanted only by five hundred of the lowest of the people ; while the long trains conveying the garrison and inhabitants, the real strength of Roudschouck, to the southward, formed an army in the field little less formidable than it had been behind its blood-stained ramparts. A deplorable catastrophe, characteristic of the envenomed character of these semi-religious wars, took place at the same period. Kamenskoi, disquieted at the prolonged resistance of Roudschouck, and the intelligence of great preparations at Constantinople, despatched orders to General St Priest, in command at Sistowa, to destroy that town, and bring all his forces to the main army. These orders, dictated in a moment of groundless

87.
Evacuation
of Rouds-
chouck, and
ruin of Sis-
towa.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1812.

1 Val. 139,
140. Jom. iii.
46788.
Conclusion
of the cam-
paign.
Oct 29.

Dec. 12.

alarm, were too faithfully executed: Sistowa was reduced to a heap of ruins; its inhabitants, twenty thousand in number, were transported to the opposite side of the Danube, where they were sheltered from the drenching rains in huts newly-constructed: great flocks of wild pigeons settled in the ruins of this once flourishing town; and its smiling environs, composed of vine-clad hills, intermingled with roses, were soon choked by weeds, and tenanted only by the wild foxes from the neighbouring solitudes.¹ *

It was necessary, however, to do something to give eclat to the conclusion of the campaign; and for this reason, the siege of Nicopolis was undertaken—a considerable town on the southern bank of the Danube, though not so flourishing as Sistowa had been. Kamenskoi, accordingly, sat down before it with thirty thousand men; while the indefatigable Bosniak Aga approached Tirnova with seventeen thousand who had followed his standard from Roudschouck, and who soon formed the basis of a respectable army. The commander of that place, however, shut his gates against such formidable guests; and the Bosniak Aga at length found refuge in Plewne, while the Pasha of Giurgevo was received into Tirnova. Meanwhile Nicopolis capitulated, and the Russians recrossed the Danube, and took up their winter-quarters for the most part in Wallachia and Moldavia, leaving three divisions only on the right bank, at Nicopolis, Roudschouck, and Silistria. Soon after, the cabinet of St Petersburg, worn out with this endless war of sieges, in which they frequently combated at a disadvantage, and foreseeing a formidable struggle nearer home, where they would need all their strength, sent orders to Kamenskoi to destroy all the fortified places on the right bank of the Danube, with the exception of Roudschouck, which was to be retained only as a *tête-du-pont*. In pursuance of these directions, the walls of

* A singular proof of the extraordinary fertility of the soil, and its adaptation for the cultivation of the vine, occurred at Roudschouck at this period. The whole slopes in its vicinity are covered with vines, which grow in that district with such luxuriance, that though the besieging army had feasted on them for some weeks before the armistice began, yet the inhabitants there, during its continuance, reaped a very fair crop from their gardens. The combined efforts of two armies were unable to consume the profuse fruits of a few square miles. The vine, which is there indigenous, grows with such tenacity on the slopes, that it is hardly possible, by any efforts of cultivation, to extirpate it.—VAL. 47.

Silistria and Nicopolis were blown up, and Roudschouck was put in a respectable posture of defence ; but before any offensive operations could be commenced, Kamenskoi was seized with the malady of which he soon after died ; and he was succeeded by an officer destined to immortal celebrity in a more glorious war—GENERAL KUTUSOFF.¹

CHAP.
LXIX.

1811.

¹ Jom. iii.
467. Val. 141,
151.

The campaign of 1811, however, of necessity was laid out upon a defensive plan merely. The Russian army, indeed, had been reinforced in the early part of the winter by a strong division under General Suwarroff, son of the great marshal of the same name, in consequence of which, Kamenskoi, before his illness rendered him unfit for service, had made a vigorous winter-march against Loweza, which was surprised and taken, with four thousand men, in the depth of winter. But immediately afterwards, the relations between the cabinet of St Petersburg and that of the Tuileries became so menacing, that the Emperor Alexander gave orders for five divisions of the army to break up from their winter-quarters on the Danube, and direct their march, not towards the Balkan and Constantinople, but to Poland and the Vistula. This great deduction at once reduced the Russians to one-half of their former amount ; and with fifty thousand men merely, it was not only impossible for Kutusoff to prosecute offensive operations to the south of the Danube, but even difficult for him to maintain his footing on the south of that river in the few strongholds of which he still retained possession. Encouraged by this great diminution in the strength of their enemies, and thoroughly roused by the dangers they had incurred in the preceding campaign, the Turkish government made the most vigorous efforts for the prosecution of the war ; and not only put themselves at all points into a good posture of defence, but prepared to take advantage of the weakness of their enemies, and regain all the strongholds which they had lost on the right bank of the Danube. Achmet Pasha, who had gained such renown by the defence of Brahilow, commanded the main army, which numbered sixty thousand combatants, with seventy-eight pieces of artillery admirably equipped. He advanced in the middle of June towards Roudschouck at the head of this imposing force, while at the same time a corps of twenty thousand

89.

Great draft of
troops from
the Danube
to Poland.
Jan. 19.

Feb. 1811.

CHAP.
LXIX.

1811.

1 Jom. iii.
542. Val.
150, 152.

men was detached to the left, towards Widdin, to keep in check Czerny George and the Servians, and nearly the same number to the right, to observe Silistria, Nicopolis, and Tourtoukai, and occupy any of these places which might be evacuated by the enemy.¹

90.
Battle of
Rouds-
chouck.

July 2.

It affords a strong proof of the native vigour, which, despite the innumerable errors of their political institutions, animated the Turkish empire, that they were capable, in the third year of the war, and without any external aid, of putting forth such formidable forces. Their approach immediately made Kutusoff concentrate his troops, and he himself crossed the Danube, and took post with eighteen thousand men in front of Rouds-chouck. As the superiority of the enemy, especially in cavalry, was so great, the Russian general remained on the defensive, and awaited their approach in the regular squares, which had so often dissipated the vast hordes of the Osmanli horse. The attack of the Ottomans was made in their usual manner—charging with loud shouts these squares on three sides at once; but in the tumult of the onset, and when the infantry were in a manner encircled by their enemies, the discernment of the Grand Vizier had prepared a separate corps which was to penetrate into the town. This able plan all but succeeded. The Turkish guns, admirably directed, ploughed through the Russian squares, while the spahis, in every quarter, threw themselves with impetuosity upon them over the whole position. The squares on the right, where they had the advantage of having one flank secured by the precipitous banks of the river Lomin, withstood the shock; but the centre suffered severely from the cannonade of the Turkish batteries, and the left was wellnigh swept away by the torrent of their incomparable cavalry.²

2 Val. 152,
152. Jom. iii.
543.91.
Desperate
contest, which
at length ter-
minates to
the advantage
of the Rus-
sians.

Kutusoff brought up his dragoons to keep at a distance the increasing squadrons of the spahis; but then was seen how inadequate the European is to the encounter of the Asiatic horse. In a moment the advancing mass of the Muscovites and Cossacks were charged in flank, pierced through, and overthrown. Four regiments were almost destroyed; and the Ottoman horsemen, deeming the victory won, dashed through the intervals of the

squares with deafening cries, disregarding the fire which assailed them on either flank, and penetrated in the rear even as far as the gardens of the town. All seemed lost; and if the Grand Vizier had had infantry at hand to support his cavalry, it would have been so. But the gallant horsemen, having no aid from foot-soldiers, were unable to establish themselves in the fortress; the grape-shot from the ramparts shook their ranks, and they were compelled to retreat through the steady squares, who stood immovable as if rooted to the ground, and again poured in a deadly volley on either side of the now diminished squadrons. This completed the discomfiture of the Turks, who took refuge in their intrenched camp; but although Kutusoff, seeing the field deserted, advanced to the front of its rampart, he did not venture to storm the works, and soon after withdrew within the walls of Roudschouck, with the loss of three thousand men, the Turks being weakened by at least an equal number.¹

Though this memorable battle was highly honourable to the discipline and intrepidity of the Russians, considering the great numerical superiority of their enemies, and the admirable quality of their cavalry, yet it convinced Kutusoff of the impossibility of maintaining his footing on the right bank of the Danube. The extensive works of Roudschouck required a garrison of at least ten thousand men—nearly half the disposable force which he had at command. He wisely resolved, accordingly, to prefer a campaign in the field, where the discipline of his troops might give them the advantage, to the murderous contest behind walls, where the Turks were so formidable. Abandoning, therefore, to his antagonist the object of so much bloodshed, he withdrew from Roudschouck after barbarously burning the town, and crossed over entirely to the left bank of the river. The Bosniak Aga, amidst the pomp of Oriental power and the clang of military instruments, again took possession of the ramparts which he had so nobly defended; the fugitive inhabitants of the fortress returned in joyful crowds to their much-loved and long-deserted homes; the standards of Mahomet were again displayed from the battlements; the beautiful vineyards in the environs were cleared out and dressed by the hands of the owners;² and, contrary

¹ Jom. iii.
543. Val. 152,
155.

92.
Evacuation
of Rouds-
chouck by
the Russians.

² Val. 156,
158. Jom.
iii. 543.

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LXIX.

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93.
The Turks
cross the
Danube.
Sept. 8.

to the order of things for above a century, the Crescent appeared triumphant over the Cross.

Overjoyed at this great success, the Grand Vizier determined to cross the Danube, and expel the Russians from all the Turkish territory which they held in Wallachia and Moldavia. After six weeks spent in repairing the fortifications of Roudschouck, and collecting forces on all sides, the passage was effected in the night of the 8th September; the Grand Vizier having with great skill drawn the attention of his antagonists to a feigned point of passage, whereby the real one was overlooked. No sooner, however, was the passage discovered than the Russians under Boulatoff, who were nearest at hand, commenced an assault upon the Ottomans. But the latter, with great skill, had already thrown up some rude works: the thick brushwood with which they were surrounded prevented the advance of the Muscovites in masses; the Ottomans maintained their wonted superiority in bush-fighting; batteries, erected on some heights on the right bank, spread death through the Russian ranks, and under cover of their fire the passage was continued with such vigour that by noon six thousand men, almost all janissaries, and six pieces of cannon, were established on the left bank. Boulatoff, however, was not to be discouraged: having received reinforcements, which raised his force to eight thousand men, he hazarded a third assault, but with no better success. Finally, losing two thousand of his best troops in this murderous contest, besides a gun and a standard, the Russians retired; and the Turks, with deafening shouts and sabre in hand, sallied out of their intrenchments, and cut off the heads of the slain and the unfortunate wounded.¹

¹ Val. 159,
160. Jom. iii.
543.

94.
The Turks
strengthen
their position.
Sept. 10.

General Sabanejef, during these events, had succeeded in forcing his way through the brushwood, and established a battery within half cannon-shot of the Turkish intrenchment on the left bank, which effectually cut off all communication between it and the remainder of the army on the right. But Kutusoff ordered this advanced position to be abandoned in the night; and, issuing orders in all directions to concentrate round the outside of the intrenchment, brought up his flotilla to cannonade the enemy on the northern shore. It was too late, how-

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1811.

Sept. 12.

Sept. 18.

Sept. 20.

Sept. 21.

1 Jom. iii.
543. Val.
161, 165.95.
Kutusoff's
measures to
circumvent
the enemy.

Sept. 29.

ever, for success in this way : the enemy were now solidly established on the left bank ; the flotilla was so roughly handled by the Turkish artillery that one of the vessels sank in the river ; the passage of troops continued incessantly, and by the 18th thirty thousand men, with fifty pieces of cannon, were established on the left bank, in a large intrenched camp, with redoubts at its angles. At the same time an equal force on the right, under the Grand Vizier in person, had established a sort of city, in which his tent was conspicuous, decked out with unusual splendour. At this period the Russians around the intrenchments were so weak, that if Achmet Pasha had fallen vigorously on his opponents he would probably have gained such decisive success as would have restored Wallachia and Moldavia to the Ottoman arms. But the precious time, big with such portentous events, was consumed in erecting intrenchments round the troops which had passed over ; and, in the mean time, two strong divisions of infantry and a large body of Cossacks came up, which raised the Russian force to thirty-five thousand men. Kutusoff now resolved to take advantage of the exposed situation of the enemy, and if possible, by cutting off the communication of those passed over to the left bank, compel them to surrender. He allowed the Turks, accordingly, after severe fighting, to extend their camp, and even erect a redoubt a mile in advance of its former limits. But while his troops were lost in astonishment at the supineness of their general, he was preparing, with the secrecy and finesse peculiar to his character, the means of involving the enemy in a signal calamity.¹

The intention of the Grand Vizier was to have gradually pushed his troops forward, covering themselves with intrenchments and redoubts as they advanced, till he got possession of the village of Malka, about two miles farther on, where there were considerable magazines. This post he meant also to fortify, and thereby acquire a solid footing on the northern bank. To defeat this project the Russian general, on the night of the 29th, erected four large redoubts in an exterior circle around the Ottoman camp, and these were soon succeeded by eight more. Alarmed at the progress of this line of circumvallation, which in the form of a semicircle enclosed their camp,

CHAP.
LXIX.1811.
Oct. 3.

Oct. 4.

¹ Val. 165,
167. Joni. iii.
543.

with both ends resting on the Danube, the Turks, after several bloody combats, erected a new redoubt near the river, to cover their communication with the southern shore ; but the Russians stormed it before the works were finished, and put the garrison, consisting of four hundred Albanians, to the sword. A sally of the Ottomans, immediately made to regain this important post, was repulsed with the loss of above fifteen hundred men. After this severe check the Turks remained quietly within their intrenchments ; while the Russian general erected a ninth redoubt on his extreme right near the Danube, which completed the investment of the Turkish camp, and considerably straitened their communications with the opposite bank of the river.¹

96.
He crosses the
Danube.

Oct 10.

Oct. 13.

As long, however, as the Ottomans had a passage of any sort open to the other side, it was impossible that they could be reduced to any serious difficulties for want of provisions ; and Kutusoff was therefore tempted to hazard an expedition to the other bank, in order, if possible, to dislodge the enemy from the ground on the opposite side, from whence the Grand Vizier's camp was supplied with food and reinforcements. This important operation was intrusted to General Markoff, who with ten thousand men set out from the Russian camp, after dark, on the night of the 10th October, and succeeded early the next morning in throwing his light troops and Cossacks across. The flotilla, which had been ordered to the point in order to transport across the main body, could not get down from the violence of the current ; in consequence of which their passage was delayed for twenty-eight hours, and was not effected till the morning of the 13th. During this time the greatest anxiety prevailed at headquarters, where very scanty information of their proceedings had been received ; but, strange to say, though the point where the Russians had been disembarked on the right bank was not above six miles from the Ottoman camp there, it remained entirely unknown to its generals. Kutusoff's disquietude, however, was at length dissipated. Markoff, having got over ten battalions and five hundred horse, proceeded instantly to the attack of the Turkish camp on the right bank, leaving the remainder to continue their passage.

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97.

Surprise and
total defeat of
the Turks on
the right
bank.

¹ Val. 169,
173. Jom. iii.
543, 544.

98.

Desperate
situation of
the Turkish
army on the
right bank.

The surprise was complete. The Turks, never dreaming of being assailed on their own side, made scarcely any resistance; the civil functionaries of the Grand Vizier, the merchants and traders who thronged the encampment, took to flight in the utmost consternation, and, not deeming themselves in safety at Roudschouek, which had been stripped of nearly all its heavy artillery for the use of the camp, took the road for Rasgrad and Schumla. The magnificent tent of the Grand Vizier, the whole baggage and stores of the army, an immense number of horses, camels, and carriages, and prodigious booty, fell into the hands of the victors, who lost but eight men in this felicitous attack. Markoff, however, without casting a thought on the booty, seized the Turkish batteries, which he turned against the enemy on the other side, where the remainder of the Russian army was drawn up in battle array, witnesses of his triumph; and, while eighty pieces of cannon thundered against the Ottoman camp, demanded with loud cries to be led to the assault.¹

Had Kutusoff possessed the daring of Alexander or Cæsar, he would have taken advantage of the enthusiasm of the moment and the consternation of the enemy, and instantly led his troops to the attack of the intrenched camp on the left bank; and there can be little doubt that, if this had been done, it would have been carried, and the whole Turkish army destroyed. But his genius was essentially cautious; and he never would owe to hazard what he hoped to gain by combination. Repressing, therefore, the ardour of his troops, he contented himself with a furious cannonade; and meanwhile the Grand Vizier himself, who was on the right bank, escaped in a boat to Roudschouek, after in vain proposing an armistice with a view to negotiations for peace. The Pasha Tschoban Ogloo, (Son of the Shepherd,) son of one of the richest princes of Asia Minor, then took the command, and by his firmness and resources in the most trying circumstances, extorted the admiration even of his enemies. The circumstances of the Turks were wholly desperate. The Russian artillery, now augmented to two hundred pieces of cannon, on both sides of the Danube, kept up an incessant fire upon them night and day; a strong flotilla, both above and below, precluded all access

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1812.

or escape by water ; a formidable semicircle of redoubts, with batteries in their interstices, enclosed them on the land side ; their provisions were soon exhausted ; forage there was none for their horses ; their tents were burned for fuel ; and the troops, during the damp nights of autumn, lay on the open ground, exposed to the ceaseless tempest of shot. Yet all these accumulated horrors could not shake the firm mind of the Turkish general. He repeatedly refused the most advantageous offers of capitulation ; and after having consumed his last horses, he was forming the audacious project of cutting his way by a sudden irruption through the Russian left, and intrenching himself opposite to Roudschouck, and under the shelter of its guns, when a convention concluded at Giurgevo, in the end of October, with a view to a peace between the two powers, put an end to the miseries and saved the honour of these brave men.¹

Oct. 28.
¹ Join. iii.
544. Val. 173,
175.

99.
Capitulation
of the Turks.

It was stipulated that they should be fed from the Russian magazines till their fate was finally determined by the plenipotentiaries of the two powers, then assembled at Giurgevo—a condition which was faithfully performed ; and on the 4th December they finally quitted their camp, in virtue of a convention by which they were to evacuate it without their arms or cannon, and be quartered in the villages in the neighbourhood of Bucharest, on condition of having them restored only if peace was concluded.

Dec. 3.

The Russians immediately entered the bloodstained intrenchments, the object of such desperate strife ; and their interior told how dreadful had been the sufferings of the heroic defenders. The ground was strewed with the dead bodies of men and horses, which the survivors had not possessed sufficient strength to inter ; limbs struck off by the cannon-shot, broken arms, overturned gun-carriages, and putrid corpses, lay on all sides ; the earth even was ploughed up in many places by the shot ; but the survivors, though pale and emaciated, still preserved their calm and resolute air. Five thousand, amidst the respect of their enemies, delivered up their arms, with fifty-one guns ; above twelve thousand had perished by disease or the sword since the cannonade commenced.²

² Val. 175,
176.

This concluded the operations of the campaign, and put an end to this bloody war, in which both parties had

made prodigious efforts, and neither had gained decisive success. In Little Wallachia, Ishmael Bey had invaded the Russian side of the river with thirty thousand men; and General Sass, who commanded in that quarter with very inferior forces, was at one period so hard pressed, that Kutusoff in the middle of September sent him orders to evacuate the province entirely, and join him in his camp before the Grand Vizier; but that general with admirable skill maintained his ground, defeated the enemy in several partial encounters, and at length compelled him to retire back to the right bank about the same time that the great disaster befell the army of the Grand Vizier in the neighbourhood of Roudschouck.¹

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1811

100
Conclusion of
the campaign
in Little
Wallachia.
Sept. 16.

¹ Val. 176,
277. Jom. iii.
544.

Negotiations in good earnest were carried on for peace; for both parties were sincerely desirous of an accommodation. The Russians, well aware of the formidable contest with Napoleon which was impending over them, were anxious at any price to terminate the hostilities on the Danube, and bring Kutusoff's force to the assistance of the grand armies on the Niemen. At first sight it might have been supposed, that what it was so much the interest of the Russians to obtain, it could not be for the advantage of the Turks to concede: but in this instance it was otherwise, and the good sense of the Turks triumphed over all the efforts which the French ambassador, Latour Maubourg, made to retain them in hostilities with Russia. By a singular but just retribution, all the powers whose ambassadors or envoys assisted at these conferences were either threatened by, or had been offered a share of, Napoleon's spoliations; and their concurring testimony removed all doubt from the minds of the Turkish ministers as to the imminent danger to which they would be exposed if Napoleon should obtain the same supremacy in Eastern which he had long enjoyed in Western Europe.²

101.
Negotiations
for a peace
between
Russia and
Turkey.

² Jom. iii.
545.

The English made them acquainted with the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, already mentioned;* whereby, in consideration of the fidelity with which they had adhered to his fortunes during the war in Poland, and through the disasters of Eylau, the French Emperor had not only agreed to the entire partition of their European domi-

* *Ante*, Chap. xlv. § 78.

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1811.

102.

The Turks
are made
acquainted
with Napo-
leon's trea-
cherous de-
signs against
them.

¹ Val. 178,
180. Jom. iii.
545.

103.

Peace of
Bucharest.
May 28, 1812.

nions, Constantinople and Roumelia alone excepted, but had actually stipulated for the largest shares, viz. Greece, the islands of the Archipelago, Albania, and Macedonia, to himself. Russia, a party to that scheme of plunder, and intimately acquainted with all its details, revealed them fully to the Turkish ambassadors; the secret conferences of Erfurth were made known, and documents bearing the official signatures of the French plenipotentiaries were exhibited to them by Kutusoff, which left no doubt of the truth of these representations. Austria disclosed the offer made to her of Servia and Bosnia, if she would concur in the partition; while Czerny George, alarmed at the clear proofs which had been adduced of the intention to dethrone him in the scramble, gave ample details of the inquiries and surveys made by Marshal Marmont immediately after the treaty of Tilsit, to ascertain the most expedient mode of effecting the conquest of the French share in the partition.^{1*}

Struck by the concurring representations of all these powers, and the clear evidence which was adduced to support them, the Divan no longer hesitated. The Turks saw clearly that if Napoleon gained the mastery of Russia, he would instantly turn the force of both empires against them—that Moscow would be but a step to Constantinople.† They strove hard for a considerable time to obtain restitution of all the provinces conquered by the Russians, in the beginning of the war, to the north of the Danube; but finding the Russians resolute to retain at least the provinces to the east of the Pruth, and rather to run the hazard of a continuance of the war than consent to their restoration, they at length agreed to allow that river to form the boundary of the two nations, and peace was concluded on these terms in the end of May. The treaty with Russia was speedily followed by one with Great Britain, which was signed on the 18th July. By the first treaty, although the cabinet of St Petersburg lost Wallachia and Moldavia, which they had declared

* *Ante*, Chap. xlv. § 81.

† “Made aware by my enemies of the stipulations of Erfurth, and by Austria of the *project* for the partition of Turkey which I had proposed to her, the Turks abandoned themselves without reserve to the counsels of England. The British ambassador soon regained all his former credit with the Divan.”—JOMINI.—*VIE DE NAPOLEON*, iii. 545.

part of their empire, they gained Bessarabia, which gave them the inappreciable advantage, in a contest both with Turkey and Austria, of commanding the mouths of the Danube; and Admiral Tchichagoff, who had been sent from St Petersburg to conclude the treaty, as Kutusoff's proceedings were esteemed too dilatory, set off from Bucharest for the Vistula on the 31st July, at the head of forty thousand men, who appeared with fatal effect on the great theatre of Europe at the passage of the Beresina.¹

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1812.

¹ Jom. iii. 545. Val. 178, 180. See the treaty in Martin, iii. 397, 226.

Napoleon has repeatedly said that the folly of the Turks in making peace at Bucharest with the Russians, their hereditary enemies, was such, that it altogether exceeded the bounds of reasonable calculation; and therefore that he was not to be blamed for the disastrous consequences which flowed from the appearance of Tchichagoff's army in his rear when he lay at Moscow. In truth, however, the Turks were not in this instance so limited in their political vision as the French writers are desirous to represent; and their conduct in concluding that treaty was rather the result of that clear judgment and strong common sense which, whenever the facts of a case are distinctly brought before them, has always distinguished the Ottoman councils. They knew well the hostility of Russia, and they had often experienced the weight of her arms; but they had felt the ingratitude of France; and the desertion of a friend sinks deeper into the breast than the enmity of a foe. They were aware of their danger from Muscovite ambition; but they were also no strangers to the power and designs of Napoleon: and they apprehended with reason immediate destruction from his power, if, by subjugating Russia, he was put in a situation to direct the whole resources of Europe against their devoted capital. They never forgot their desertion at Tilsit by the French Emperor, nor the unprovoked project of spoliation on his part which succeeded it: and justly feared that, although the mutual jealousy of the two imperial allies had hitherto preserved them from destruction, they could not look for a continuance of their respite if the forces of both were concentrated in one hand.

104.
Reasons which induced the Turks to conclude this peace.

The vigorous and unlooked-for resistance which Turkey at this period opposed to all the efforts of the Russians, sufficiently illustrates the elements of strength which at

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1812.

105.
Great re-
sources
exhibited by
Turkey in
this war.

that period lay dormant, till roused by present danger, in the Ottoman empire; and may perhaps suggest the necessity of modifying some of those opinions as to the declining condition of the power of the Grand Seignior, which have so long been received as political maxims in Europe. When it is recollected that Russia for three years directed her whole force against the Turks; that in the year 1810 she had a hundred thousand men upon the Danube; and that this array was composed of the conquerors of Eylau—it certainly appears not a little surprising that the Ottoman empire was not altogether overthrown in the shock. Nevertheless the contest was extremely equal; and though the forces with which the Ottomans had to contend on the Danube fully equalled those which fronted Napoleon on the Vistula, yet they opposed nearly as effectual a resistance to the Muscovite arms as did the conqueror of Western Europe. The contest began on the Danube, and it terminated, after three years' bloodshed, on the same river, with the loss of only one or two frontier towns to the Ottomans. This broad and decisive fact proves, that although the political power of Turkey has unquestionably declined for the last century and a half, and the enormous abuses of its civil government have occasioned during that period a constant diminution in its inhabitants and strength, yet it still possesses great resources when they are fairly drawn forth by impending danger; and that in the native bravery of its inhabitants is often to be found, as in the British soldiers, more than a compensation for all the errors of their direction or government.

106.
Character of
Sultaun
Mahmoud.

Sultaun Mahmoud, who attempted to arrest this decay, and draw forth, under more enlightened guidance, the still powerful resources of the Ottoman empire, was one of those remarkable men whose character has stamped a mighty impress on the age in which he lived. Albeit bred in the seclusion and effeminacy of the harem, he possessed the native courage and hardihood of his race; though little informed by education or social intercourse, he had sagacity enough to perceive the increasing inferiority of the Mahometan to the Christian empires, and courage to undertake what was thought to be the remedy. Instead of ascribing the decline of his dominions, like

most of his countrymen, to the irresistible decrees of fate, and submitting to it with the apathy of a predestinarian, he set himself vigorously to avert the evil, and sought, by the destruction of the privileged classes, and the introduction of European discipline and usages, both in civil and military affairs, to communicate to his aged empire a portion of the energy of western civilisation. The contest with ancient habits, inveterate from custom, engrafted upon law, and sanctified by religion, was long and obstinate; and the catastrophe by which it was brought to a close in the destruction of the janissaries in 1825, one of the most awful recorded in history. Whatever the ultimate effect of that tremendous event may be, it stamped Mahmoud's character for all future ages, and bespoke the fearless energy, the undaunted courage, the unflinching rigour, which, braving the perils that had proved fatal to so many of his race, could thus subdue them all, and fix, by his single hand, a different impress upon the institutions of a vast empire.

Nevertheless Sultaun Mahmoud will not bear a comparison with Peter the Great; and the destruction of the janissaries will, to all appearance, be attended with very different effects from the overthrow of the Muscovite strelitzes. Mahmoud would never have been found in the workshop of Saardam; he was not at the head of his troops under the walls of Varna, nor on the field of Koniah. Political regeneration, difficult in all, is impossible in Mahometan states: the religion and institutions of the Koran preclude the possibility of expansion or alteration; they are inconsistent with the adoption of improvement by foreign usages. The power of Turkey has been irrecoverably broken by the destruction of part and the alienation of the whole of the janissary body. The national resources have been ruined, without the vigour of a different civilisation being acquired; the strength of Asia has been lost, without that of Europe being gained. Like the kingdom of Mysore, in Hindostan, the Ottoman empire has sunk to the earth in the attempt to substitute the military system of the west for that of the east. This, accordingly, appeared decisively in the next contest which ensued: the line of the Danube was no longer maintained; the Balkan ceased to be an impas-

107.
Fatal effects
which have
followed his
destruction
of the Janis-
saries.

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1812.

108.
Extreme
danger of
making any
change of a
religious
character
in a state.

sable barrier ; in two campaigns, Russia was at Adrianople ; in one, the Pasha of Egypt was within a few days' march of Scutari.

The janissaries were doubtless a serious evil, and they opposed an impenetrable barrier to every species of improvement ; but they constituted the military strength of the nation, they were identified with its religious spirit, they were interwoven with its most venerable institutions. It is one thing to see that a disease has overspread a vital part of the frame ; it is another and a very different thing to be able in mature life to cut it out. The real bond of union in every great empire is its religion ; it is that which knits together the high and the low, the rich and the poor ; it is that which constitutes its vital spirit. Change, even for the better, is generally fatal ; the substitution of a true for a false faith, will doubtless benefit mankind, but it will generally subvert the state which makes the alteration. The substitution of Christianity itself for heathenism, undoubtedly accelerated the fall of the Roman empire. Let every state which has attained mature years, and consolidated its power, beware of making a great innovation in its institutions, especially of a religious character. Even though those which are introduced may be preferable in the general case to those which are abandoned, it is rare that the transition can be made with safety. A certain character has been imprinted by the hand of nature upon every old-established nation, as upon every full-grown individual, and any considerable change will only accelerate the descent of both to the grave.

CHAPTER LXX.

ACCESSION OF BERNADOTTE TO THE SWEDISH THRONE,
AND CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE
RUSSIAN WAR OF 1812.

IN former days, Sweden maintained a distinguished place in the European commonwealth; and she can number among her sons some of the most illustrious men whom modern times have produced. The Goths, who spread through Poland and the Ukraine into the Roman provinces, and appeared as suppliants on the banks of the Danube, from whence they were ferried across by Roman hands never to return, originally came from the southern part of the Scandinavian peninsula. The present name of the province of Gothland still attests the original seat of the conquerors of Rome. On many occasions, their descendants, who remained in their native plains, have caused their prowess to be felt, and their virtues to be respected, by the neighbouring nations. On others, they interfered with decisive effect in the most interesting contests in which Europe has been engaged. The name of Gustavus Vasa is still repeated in every civilised tongue, among the patriot heroes whose actions have contributed to bless mankind; Protestant Europe will ever acknowledge, with gratitude, the inestimable services rendered to the great cause of religious, and through it of civil freedom, by the heroic valour and warlike abilities of Gustavus Adolphus; and the interest of youth to the end of the world will be fascinated by the romantic story of Charles XII., who rivalled Napoleon in the daring of his spirit, and outstripped him in the marvels of his victories. Nor will the student of the military art study with less

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1.
Greatness of
Sweden in
former times.

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care the history of those wonderful abilities which enabled the little kingdom of Sweden, with hardly two millions of souls, to render its armies a match, and at one period more than a match, for the gigantic strength of Russia, led by the consummate talents of Peter the Great. Science has equal reason to acknowledge the lustre with which the light of Swedish genius has illuminated the long night of the Arctic circle: for she gave birth to Berzelius, the first of modern chemists; and in Linnæus she has for ever unfolded the hidden key by which the endless variety of floral beauty is to be classified, and the mode in which the mysterious link is preserved between vegetable and animal life.

2.
Description
of the Scan-
dinavian
peninsula.

But with the advent of times when greater empires were brought into the field, and the wars of nations came to be carried on by numerous standing armies, drawn from the population and maintained by the resources of vast empires, Sweden was unable to maintain this elevated station. Her physical resources are wholly inadequate for such protracted efforts; and the attempt which Charles XII. made to engage her in long and arduous wars, so completely drained the resources of the country, that they did not recover the loss for half a century. The population of the Swedish monarchy in 1808, including Finland, was hardly three millions, and these scanty numbers were scattered over so vast an extent of surface—above three times that of the British isles—as greatly to diminish their efficiency in external warfare.* The country, however, possesses great natural advantages. Though the climate, from its situation, is rigorous in winter, yet it is often less so than might have been supposed in so northern a latitude; the cold damp fogs of Germany are wanting; the bottoms of the valleys in Gothland and the southern provinces, which are the residence of two-thirds of the inhabitants of the country,¹

¹ Malte
Brun, viii.
557, 542.

	Square Miles.	Population.
* Sweden Proper now contains,	200,000	2,800,000
Finland,	102,432	1,380,000
Total in 1826,	302,432	3,650,000
Do. in 1808, about,		3,000,000
Population per square mile,	12	
Do. in England, by Census 1841,	290	

—MALTE BRUN, viii. 561, 565; and vi. 631.

are capable of producing admirable crops of wheat, barley, and oats; rich pastures are to be found on the hill-sides; and the vast mountain ranges which it contains are clothed with noble forests of pine, birch, and oak.

A lofty range of mountains, rivalling the Alps in grandeur and elevation, intersects the whole Scandinavian peninsula, nearly from the North Cape to the waters of the Sound, and forms the eternal barrier between Sweden and Norway; but the descent to the Baltic is more gradual than that to the German ocean, and a much greater quantity of level and arable land is to be found there than in the mountain clefts and alpine vales which enclose the happy Norwegian peasantry. The level part of Sweden is intersected in many places by long ridges of granite rock of no great elevation, which form, as it were, the natural walls of its beautiful valleys; but within these rude barriers, smiling spots of verdure and fertile fields are to be found, while rich woods of beech and oak frequently clothe their base. A vast number of inland lakes, easily susceptible of artificial communication, both diversify the scene in the interior, and furnish the means of an extensive inland commerce; productive iron mines have long poured a perennial stream of wealth into Dalecarlia; and farther to the north, where the rigour of the climate almost precludes the raising of grain crops, the bounty of nature has given a short but warm summer, which brings to maturity the richest pastures. Innumerable lakes and mountain torrents there furnish, by their fish, acceptable stores for the long winter; the heat of the brief summer, often exceeding that of Italy, furnishes ample food for the cattle during the whole year; nor is a more delightful picture of human happiness any where to be found than in those woody recesses where human industry has cleared out a few green spots amidst the surrounding gloom, and unsophisticated man dwells in plenty and contentment,¹

3.
Its ranges of
mountains
and plains.

¹ Aerbis' Travels, i. 324, 441. Clarke's Travels, ix. 172. Malte Brun, viii. 537, 549.

— "Inter aquas
Nemorumque noctem."

The political circumstances of this highly interesting country are not less favourable than its physical advantages. The ancient free spirit of the north—that noble spirit which has spread the European race through every

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4.

Political circumstances of
the Swedes.

part of the world, and is ultimately destined to subdue it—has always flourished in its native seats. From the earliest times, Sweden has enjoyed the advantage of a free constitution and representative form of government; and although the want of considerable towns and the absence of the mercantile genius, over the greater part of its territory, has prevented the vigour of the proper democratic fervour from rising in its cities, yet the rural cultivators have always preserved in a high degree the sturdy principles of Gothic liberty. The throne is hereditary; but its power is defined and limited by the constitution. The States of the realm must concur in all laws; they are exclusively vested with the right of laying on taxes and managing the public revenue. They consist of four orders; the noblesse, in which each noble family has a representative; the clergy, represented by the bishops and certain deputies from the rural pastors; the burgesses, chosen by the several burghs; and the representatives of the peasants, elected by themselves in open assemblies. The people are universally educated; landed property, especially in the northern provinces, is very much divided among them; and no country in the world possesses, in proportion to its population, a greater number of clergy, who instruct the people in the pure tenets of the Protestant religion. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, of all others the most favourable for the development of the principles of freedom, and despite the presence of a House of Peasants, peculiar, of all the European monarchies, to Sweden and Norway, many of its monarchs have ruled the country with almost unlimited authority; and it is only since the constitution was settled, in 1772, that the definite boundaries of power have been ascertained. The luminous fact, that the States, except on particular emergencies, assemble only once in five years, demonstrates how far the popular part of the constitution is from having yet attained the importance and consideration which it long ago acquired in the commercial realm of Great Britain. It may teach us how materially the practice of government sometimes differs from its theory, and how much real freedom is dependant on the spirit and energy of the people, rather than the mere forms of the constitution.¹

¹ Malte
Brun, viii.
557, 558.

Industry, till of late years, was very little drawn forth in Sweden. In 1828 there were only seven thousand manufacturers in the whole country, and three thousand traders—a state of things which amply explains the distant intervals at which the States are assembled, and the great functions which, in the practical administration of government, have come to devolve on the sovereign and royal council. But the national character is admirable, and the manners of the people, except in one unhappy particular, worthy of general imitation. Brave, kind-hearted, and hospitable, sincere in their devotion, enlightened, when duly instructed, in their intellects, gentle in their disposition, obedient to the laws, and yet jealous of their own rights; the Swedish peasantry exhibit as fair a specimen of European rural civilisation as is to be met with in the whole domains of the family of Japhet. But one fatal indulgence has wellnigh obliterated all these advantages, and let in upon this simple, kind-hearted people, the whole catalogue of human sins. Drinking is universal: the liberty of distilling in every separate house, on paying a trifling duty to government for the right to use a still, has from time immemorial been established among the whole peasantry of the country; and at this moment there are no less than one hundred and fifty thousand of these manufactories of “liquid hell-fire,” as they have been well denominated, which distil annually *thirty millions* of gallons of spirits for the consumption of three millions of people.¹

The consequences of this calamitous facility in producing and obtaining spirituous liquors, have been to the last degree disastrous. Notwithstanding the small number of manufactures which are established in the country, the general simplicity of rural life, the absence of great towns, and the moderate size of its capital, which contains only eighty thousand inhabitants, the average amount of crime over all Sweden equals that of the most depraved cities in Great Britain. The illegitimate births are to the legitimate, over the whole country, as one to thirteen; while in the capital they have reached the astonishing number of one to two and three-tenths, exceeding even the proportion of Paris itself! So fearfully does this destructive passion for ardent spirits inflame the blood, and

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5.
Character of
the Swedes.¹ Laing's
Sweden, 322.
Malte Brun,
viii. 565.6.
Disastrous
effects of the
drinking
which pre-
vails.

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LXX.

1808.

¹ Malte
Brun, viii.
565. Laing's
Sweden, 322,
113, 323.

7.

Unprece-
dented
attack upon
Sweden by
Russia.
² Malte
Brun, viii.
565.

generate crime, even in the coldest latitudes ; so perfectly adequate is it to counteract all the efforts of reason, prudence, morality, and religion ; and so deplorably fallacious is the system, which, proceeding on the mistaken assumption that the people will of themselves abstain from such enjoyments as are pernicious, allows them to manufacture, without limit or restraint, this most seducing and dreadful of all physical and moral poisons.^{1*}

The Scandinavian peninsula, now happily united in one monarchy, numbering about four millions and a half of souls in its united territory, increasing at the rate, as it now does, of doubling in sixty years,² and separated from Russia by the impassable deserts which surround the Gulf of Bothnia, and from all the rest of the world by the encircling ocean, may reasonably hope, with the aid of England, to be ultimately able to maintain its independence. But the case was widely different in 1808, when Norway formed part of a separate and hostile power, and the valuable possessions of the Swedish crown on the other side of the Baltic, lay close to the metropolis and power of Russia. The cabinet of St Petersburg had long beheld with covetous eyes this valuable province, running up, as it were, to the very gates of their capital, embracing the noble fortress of Sweaborg, the key to the northern part of the Baltic, in its territory, and alone wanting to render that inland sea the boundary of their dominions from the mouths of the Vistula to the provinces bordering on the Frozen Ocean. They had never forgotten, that in the last war with Sweden the cannon of the Swedish fleet had been heard by the Empress Catharine in her own palace at St Petersburg ; and they were feelingly alive to the insult as well as danger to which their capital would be always exposed, while it

In 1789.

* The illegitimate births in Sweden, over the whole country, are to the legitimate as one to thirteen.—MALTE BRUN, viii. 565. In Middlesex it is one to thirty-eight ; over all England, one to twenty.—PORTER, i. 21. The proportion of serious crime over Gothland, to the whole population, is as one to four hundred and eighty-four. In Glasgow, in the year 1839, it was as one to four hundred and ninety-six. Over all Sweden, the persons committed for all offences, serious and trifling, are in the ratio of one in one hundred and seventy, a greater proportion than either England or Scotland.—LAING'S *Sweden*, 112, 113, 323. Mr Laing's work on this subject, though valuable in many respects, is, however, entirely fallacious, if not examined by a person familiar with the subject, from its comparing the total committals in Sweden with the committals for trial in England and Scotland ; keeping out of view the summary convictions in the latter countries, which are at least five times as numerous.

was situated so close to the territory of a neighbouring and sometimes hostile power. It has been already mentioned, accordingly, that the cabinet of St Petersburg lost no time in declaring war against Sweden early in 1808, and immediately invading Finland with a large portion of the troops who had been rendered disposable by the termination of the war in Poland; although they could assign no better reason for their hostility than the honourable adherence of the court of Stockholm to those principles and that cause which they themselves had so recently supported, and from which they had only been driven by the untoward issue of the battle of Friedland.* But the real reason was the agreement formed by the two Emperors at Tilsit for the division of the Continent between them; by which Alexander had got a *carte blanche* as to Finland and Turkey, in consideration of Napoleon getting the same as to the Spanish peninsula.

However much the patriot historians of Sweden, whose first duty is to have the interests of their country chiefly at heart, may with reason regret the determination which the Swedish monarch at this crisis adopted of holding out, and at all hazards standing by his engagements, the general historian of Europe cannot but regard it as a signal instance of magnanimity, and such as, if it had been general among crowned heads and their ministers, would have achieved, years before it actually occurred, the deliverance of Europe. In this determination the King was supported, with mournful resolution, by the Swedish nation and parliament, although the circumstances of Northern Europe left hardly any hope that they could succeed in braving the hostility of their colossal neighbours. In effect, it soon appeared that the determination of the Czar drew after it the hostility of all the Baltic powers. Denmark declared war a few days after Buxhowden's proclamation on the part of Russia, and Prussia did the same on the 11th March. But the determination of the cabinet of St Petersburg, to unite Finland at all risks to their dominions, was the real motive which had led to the war;¹ for on the 28th of the same month an imperial ukase appeared at St Petersburg, which bore —“We unite Finland, conquered by our arms, for ever to

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Feb. 6, 1808.

8.

Brave determination of the Swedes to resist this aggression.

Feb. 23.

March 11.

March 28.

¹ Hard. x. 277. Jom. iii. 73, 74.* *Ante*, Chap. li. § 47.

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9.
Capture of
Abo, and
conquest of
Finland.

our empire, and command its inhabitants forthwith to take the oath of allegiance to our throne."

Although the Russians were very far indeed from having conquered Finland at the time when this audacious proclamation was issued, requiring its inhabitants, before any treaty had been signed, or any cession made by their legitimate monarch, to take the oath of allegiance to their new masters; yet the success of their arms had been such as to justify the belief that the whole provinces on the eastern shore of the Baltic would ere long be in their possession. The King of Sweden, brave, chivalrous, confiding even to excess, and trusting that he would find the same good faith, at least in legitimate monarchs, which he felt in his own bosom, never could be brought to believe that he would become an object of hostility to Russia, merely because he continued faithful to his engagements, and the honour which he had pledged to that power. He had made, accordingly very little preparation for the defence of Finland; and the Russian government, well aware of that circumstance, resolved to precipitate the attack before he had awakened from his dream of high-minded but credulous simplicity.

Feb. 9, 1808. Early in February 1808, Buxhowden, disregarding the rigours of a winter of unusual severity, entered Finland at the head of an army of twenty thousand Russians. The Swedish troops, in no condition to make head against so formidable an enemy, were obliged to retreat; and the fortresses of Trevastus, Helsingfors, and ultimately Abo, the capital of the province, fell into the hands of the invaders. In the harbour of the latter town the great fleet of Swedish galleys was burned to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy.¹

Feb. 21.
March 2.1 Bign. vii.
351. Jom.
iii. 75.10.
Treachorous
surrender of
Sweaborg.

Encouraged by these successes, the Russian general approached Sweaborg, the Gibraltar of the north—a fortress of the first order, built upon seven rocky islands altogether detached from the shore, strongly fortified with seven hundred pieces of cannon on the ramparts; containing the great naval and military arsenal of Finland, and a harbour equal to any in the world for capaciousness and depth. It was garrisoned by three thousand regular troops, and an equal number of militia, under the command of Admiral Cronstedt, an officer who

had hitherto borne an unblemished reputation. But it soon appeared that if Alexander hoped to rival his great predecessor of the same name in the ancient world by the lustre of his military exploits, he had not neglected the golden key by which the father of that conqueror, at little cost of blood or treasure, secured such important acquisitions to the Macedonian monarchy. The investment of Sweaborg commenced in the first week of March, when the still frozen waves of the Baltic permitted the troops to approach the walls on their icy surface ; and after a shadow of a bombardment of three weeks' duration, the governor shamefully surrendered at discretion. By this great blow the Russians became masters—in addition to an impregnable fortress, a noble harbour, and vast arsenal of two thousand pieces of cannon on the ramparts and in the magazines—of a large flotilla, which the governor had orders to burn rather than suffer it to fall into the hands of the enemy.^{1*}

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March 8.

April 6.

¹ Bign. vii.
351, 352.
Jorn. iii. 75,
76.

This dreadful blow, which at once gave the Russians a firm footing in Finland, where before the end of the campaign in that year their forces were augmented to forty thousand men, subdued the spirit of the Swedes. The danger of their situation soon became apparent from the capture of the important islands of Aland and Gothland, which took place immediately after, whereby the Muscovites acquired, as it were, so many stepping-stones across the Baltic, from which they might menace the independence of Sweden itself. Universal consternation in consequence prevailed ; nor was this feeling of disquietude diminished by observing how insensible the King was to the manifest danger of his situation. Instead of supporting the troops in Finland, who so gallantly bore up against treason at Sweaborg, and the overwhelming numbers of the enemy in the field, he first alienated the whole diplomatic body in Europe, by arresting, early in March, M. Alopaeus, the Russian minister at Stockholm—a violation of the laws of nations, noways justified by the Muscovite invasion of Finland, as the ambassador, at least, had no share in that unjustifiable aggression ; and next, dreaming of Charles XII. and the conquest of

11.
Consternation produced
in Sweden by
this event.

March 3.

* His instructions were precise : to defend the fortress to the last extremity, and burn the flotilla rather than permit it to fall into the hands of the enemy.—*Mem. de GUSTAVE ADOLPHE*, 1814, p. 16.

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¹ Bign. vii.
352, 354.
Jom. iii. 77,
79.

Norway, he actually, in the midst of his misfortunes, assembled twenty thousand men for the subjugation of that kingdom. Nor was the depression produced by those untoward events, and the general coalition of Northern Europe against them, diminished by the unexpected turn which, in the course of the summer, events took in their favour. Åland and Gotthland, which had yielded to the Russian arms, were retaken in May, as soon as the opening of the Baltic enabled the Swedish fleet, reinforced by a British squadron, to put to sea; and Admiral Bodiskoff, and the Muscovite garrison, were made prisoners.¹

12.
Successes of
the Swedes in
Finland, and
of the British
at sea.
May 17.
July 7.

July 29.

General Klingspor also, at the head of the Swedish troops in Finland, after having retreated as far as Uleåborg, boldly resumed the offensive; turned fiercely on his pursuers, and reinforcing his army by a large body of gallant peasants, who fought with heroic valour to avert the dreaded Muscovite yoke, forced the Russians to retreat, defeated them in several encounters, captured ninety-nine pieces of cannon, and expelled them from the whole province of East Bothnia. At sea, also, the Swedish arms prevailed over those of Russia. Admiral Kanikoff set sail with the Muscovite fleet, and omitted no opportunity of attacking the Swedish squadron with superior forces; but the next day, the British fleet, under Sir James Saumarez, having joined the Swedes with some ships of the line, the Russian admiral was glad to make the best of his way to his own harbours. A chase ensued, in the course of which two British line-of-battle ships, under Sir Samuel Hood, took a Russian seventy-four gun ship; and the admiral having, with signal incapacity, taken refuge in the open harbour of Baltisch Port, on the Russian coast, his whole fleet might with ease have been destroyed. But the British admiral prudently, and agreeably to his instructions, abstained from an act which, how glorious soever, might have inflamed the national feeling of Russia, and converted a doubtful into a real enemy. He therefore contented himself with blockading it there till the approach of winter obliged him to withdraw from the Baltic.²

² Ann. Reg.
1808, 237.
Bign. vii.
359, 365.
Hard. x. 278.

The cabinet of St Petersburg strongly urged Napoleon to take an active part in the Swedish war, by means of

the powerful force he possessed in Holstein; and, in consequence of their representations, Bernadotte entered Zealand at the head of thirty thousand men, among whom were the Spanish corps of the Marquis of Romana, who were shortly after rescued from their thralldom, as already noticed, and restored to the patriot standards in the Peninsula.* The French Emperor, though abundantly willing to take his own share in the partition, had no desire to accelerate the period of Russia obtaining hers; and he accordingly wrote from Bayonne to Caulaincourt, his ambassador at St Petersburg,—“I have nothing to gain by seeing the Russians at Stockholm.” But the British government, who were not aware of this reluctance, were seriously apprehensive of the passage of the Sound by the French troops, and the entire subjugation of Sweden by the arms of France; and therefore they despatched an expedition of ten thousand men, under Sir John Moore, to assist Sweden in resisting the combined powers, which arrived at Gothenberg in the middle of May. It was soon discovered, however, that the views of the cabinet of St James’s and those of the Swedish monarch were widely at variance as to the disposal of this force. Gustavus, full of chivalrous enthusiasm, no sooner saw so considerable a body of troops arrive to his assistance, than he began to dream of foreign conquest; and proposed to the British general, either to employ them in a descent upon Zealand, with a view to the reduction of Copenhagen, or in an expedition against Norway, or in an attack on one of the fortresses on the coast of Finland, and subsequent operations for the recovery of that province.¹

Moore’s instructions, however, which were to expose his troops as little as was consistent with the maintenance of the independence of Sweden, and mainly to watch against the passage of the Sound by the French troops, would not permit him to engage in any of these enterprises; and after repairing to Stockholm, with a view to concert operations with the King, which proved impossible, he was recalled, with his troops, by the British government, who perceived a more feasible point for continental operations in the Spanish peninsula, where

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13.
British expedition to Sweden.

Aug. 9.

May 22.

¹ Ann. Reg.
1808, 227,
238. Hard.
278, 280.
Blgn, vi. 357,
359.14.
Finland is
surrendered
by conven-
tion.
July 17.* *Ante*, Chap. liv. § 90.

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they arrived, as already noticed, immediately after the battle of Vimeira.* The departure of the English expedition completed the discouragement of the Swedish nation, by plainly evincing that, in the estimation of that power, their cause was considered as hopeless, or their King impracticable: the glorious successes in the Gulf of Bothnia had shot only like a brilliant meteor through the gloom of their arctic night; the Russian government, roused by their unexpected reverses, had poured immense reinforcements into Finland; Buxhowden, at the head of forty thousand men, compelled the Swedish troops again to retire, and by the end of October had nearly overrun the whole province; and the brave Klingspor, unable any longer to avert the stroke of fate, was compelled, in November, to sign a convention, in virtue of which the whole of Finland to the east of the Gulf of Bothnia was ceded to the Russian forces.¹

These calamitous events, which affected the Swedes the more sensibly from the warmth of their patriotic feelings, and their long exemption from political catastrophes, produced a very general opinion among the most influential classes, that a change on the throne had become indispensable. It soon became generally known that, undeterred by the loss of Pomerania and Finland, the brightest jewels in his crown, Gustavus was determined to disregard the convention concluded in Finland by his generals, and renew the war in the following year, as early as the season would admit; and the Swedes, seeing that the British expedition had left their shores, and that the whole forces of that power were engaged in the Peninsular contest, justly anticipated the entire subjugation of their country, and ruin of their independence, if the strife were any longer continued. Influenced by these considerations, which the urgency of the case soon rendered general, and swayed also not a little by a suspicion as to the sanity of the monarch, which many symptoms had rendered more than doubtful, a general understanding, as in England in 1688, took place among all parties, and for a time suspended their political differences — that the dethronement of the reigning monarch, and the elevation of his uncle,² the Duke of

Nov. 19.
1 Ann. Reg.
1808, 237,
238. Bign.
vi. 357, 361.
Hard. x. 278,
232. Jom.
iii. 76, 78.

15.
General wish
for a change
of govern-
ment.

2 Bign. viii.
159, 160.
Hard. x. 279,
230. Mem.
de Charles
Jean, i. 103,
104, par St
Donat.

* *Ante*, Chap. liv. § 71.

Sudermania, to the throne, had become indispensable ; and this virtual, though not yet expressly formed, conspiracy soon acquired consistency, and became ripe for execution, by the leading officers in the army engaging in it.

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The real object of the conspirators was to obtain for Sweden the support of some foreign power able to uphold its independence against the united forces of France and Russia, and for this purpose they offered the crown to the Duke of Gloucester. But the British government wisely declined, at so critical a moment, an acquisition which, however flattering to the national character, was likely in the end to embroil them with the northern courts, and would have been contrary to all the principles on which they had hitherto maintained the contest with France. They therefore declined the perilous offer. The same party then applied to Napoleon ; but he replied, in an evasive manner, that his honour was pledged to the Emperor of Russia and the Prince-Royal of Denmark. The Swedish malcontents, therefore, were compelled to trust to their own resources for the maintenance of their independence ; and there can be no doubt that, in the course which they adopted, they acted the part of good patriots, when the great dangers with which they were surrounded, and the imminent hazard of the independence of their country being irrevocably destroyed, are taken into account.¹

16.
The British
government
decline the
crown.

¹ St Donat,
Mem. de
Charles Jean,
i. 105.

The army on the Norwegian frontier was the first to declare itself. Early in March, Colonel Aldesparre set out himself from that force at the head of three thousand men, and marched upon Stockholm, while the remainder of the troops took possession of Gothenberg, and the principal harbours in the southern provinces of the kingdom. No sooner was Gustavus informed of these events, which were accompanied by a violent popular fermentation at Stockholm, than he quitted his country place at Haga, where he happened to be at the time, and hastened to the capital, where he shut himself up in his palace, all the avenues of which were strongly occupied by his guards. The King, however, soon found that even these faithful defenders could not be relied on ; the night

17.
Measures of
the conspira-
tors.
March 7.

March 13.

was passed in great agitation, and in giving the most

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contradictory orders. The great object of the unhappy monarch, upon finding himself deserted by all his subjects, was to get the command of relays of horses, and to raise some money for his immediate necessities upon the credit of the English subsidies. But he soon found it impossible to attain either of these objects. At the same time, the committee of insurrection in Stockholm, which embraced all the principal men in the capital, particularly the Baron d'Adlercrantz, who justly enjoyed a large share of public confidence, and General Klingspor, recently so distinguished by his defence of the province of Bothnia, deemed it of essential importance not to permit the monarch to quit the capital. And the keepers of the public treasury prevented the King from getting any money, by refusing to discharge any orders which had not the authority of the States of the kingdom.¹

¹ St Donat, Mem. de Charles Jean, i. 105, 108. Bign. viii. 161, 162. Hard. x. 282, 284.

18.
Arrest of the
King.

In this extremity, as Gustavus still persevered in his resolution to quit the capital, and as the Duke of Sudermania could not prevail upon him to abandon his design, the Baron Adlercrantz and General Klingspor, whose connexion with the insurgents was not known, were called in to assist in the deliberations. The former began an energetic remonstrance against the King's proposed departure, in the middle of which he was interrupted by Gustavus, who exclaimed—"Treason! Treason! You shall all be punished as you deserve."—"We are not traitors," replied the Baron calmly, "but good Swedes, intent only on the happiness of your majesty and of the country." At these words, the King drew his sword and threw himself on the Baron; but the latter avoided the lounge and seized the monarch by the middle, while Colonel Silfesparré got possession of his sword. "Rescue, rescue!" cried the King. "I am assassinated." Upon hearing his cries, the guards outside attempted to enter, and finding the door of the apartment locked, they were proceeding to break it open; upon which the undaunted Adlercrantz himself unlocked it, and seizing the sabre of a hussar who stood near, and the baton, the ensign of command of the adjutant-general of the guards, threw himself before the troops, who had their swords drawn, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "I

² St Donat, i. 109, 112. Bign. viii. 161.

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am now your adjutant-general, and in that quality I command you, guards, to retire." The King himself also, from a feeling of humanity, to prevent the useless effusion of blood, made a motion with his hand for them to withdraw.

Overawed by his manner, and conceiving the monarch deposed, the guards retired; but in the confusion the King had made his escape by a back-door which communicated with a postern stair, and seized in his flight the sword of Count Stromfield. Thus armed anew, he was running across the inner court of the palace towards a guard-house, where he would immediately have found troops ready to support him, when he was met by a forester of the name of Grieff, who threw himself in his way, and, though wounded in the arm, continued to hold the King until some of the conspirators arrived, by whom he was disarmed a second time, and reconducted into the state apartments. The Duke of Sudermania was immediately proclaimed regent; next day the King was conducted as a prisoner to the Castle of Drottingholm, from whence he was transferred to the palace of Grippsholm, from which a fortnight after there appeared his formal renunciation of the crown, grounded on the alleged impossibility of continuing the government in a manner consistent with the interests of the kingdom. So completely were the public in Stockholm prepared for this event, that no disturbances whatever took place there on the change of dynasty; and even the theatres of Stockholm were open on the night on which it occurred, as if nothing unusual had happened.^{1*}

19.
And his resignation of the crown.

1 St Donat,
i. 109, 113.
Bign. viii.
161, 163.

This violent but bloodless revolution was immediately followed by the elevation of Adlercrantz, Klingspor, and Aldesparre to the highest offices in the Swedish ministry. On the 3d of May the monarch was formally deposed by the States of the kingdom, and on the 5th of June the Duke of Sudermania was proclaimed King. The States of the kingdom deposed not only the dethroned monarch, but

20.
Elevation of the Duke of Sudermania to the throne.
May 3.

* Suspicions had always been entertained of the legitimacy of Gustavus the Fourth; and a story is told by some historians, that in an interview between the Queen-mother and the deposed monarch she revealed to him the secret of his birth, and that, to conceal her shame, the King was prevailed upon voluntarily to abdicate the throne. No evidence, however, is adduced to give countenance to this rumour, which rests upon a very suspicious authority, considering the interest which his successors on the throne have to throw doubts on the legitimacy of the deposed monarch.—ST DONAT, i. 3; and BIGNON, viii. 163, note.

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¹ Letter of
July 20, 1809.

his whole race,* and nothing remained but to declare his successor, who ascended the throne by the title of Charles the Thirteenth. The first care of the new monarch was to conclude a peace with Russia; and in order the better to attain that object, he wrote to Napoleon, stating "that he placed the integrity of the Swedish throne under the safeguard of the generosity of Napoleon."¹ The French Emperor, however, who was at that instant engaged in a doubtful war with Austria on the shores of the Danube, had no inclination to embroil himself with the court of St Petersburg on account of the integrity of Sweden; and in addition to that, he was expressly bound, by the conferences at Tilsit, to surrender Finland to Russia, in consideration of himself being permitted to seize upon the Spanish peninsula. Napoleon, therefore, turned a deaf ear to the petition of the Swedish monarch; and the cabinet of St Petersburg, determined to keep their prey, notified to the court of Stockholm that they were about immediately to resume hostilities.²

² Bign. viii.
168. Hard. x.
288, 289.21.
Peace be-
tween Sweden
and Russia.

March 7.

The Swedes were in no condition to make any resistance; for independently of the paralysis of their national strength which had arisen from the change of dynasty, and the universal desire for immediate peace to which it had been owing, the Russians had gained an extraordinary advantage in the spring of that year. This was by the bold march of a general destined to the highest celebrity in future times, Count Barclay de Tolly, who, taking advantage of the severe frost of spring 1809, had the hardihood to cross the Gulf of Bothnia on the ice, and had arrived in the middle of March on the Swedish side as far as Golby, on the road to Stockholm. This extraordinary event, which alone was wanting to complete the marvels of the French Revolutionary war, put a decisive

* "We abjure by this present act all the fidelity and obedience which we owe to our King, Gustavus the Fourth, hitherto King of Sweden, and we declare both him and his heirs, born, or to be born, now and for ever dethroned from the throne and government of Sweden." This is perhaps the most open and undisguised dethronement of a monarch by the States of a kingdom which is recorded in history; and it is not a little remarkable, that it not only was accomplished without the death of the reigning monarch, but without the spilling of a single drop of blood on the part of his subjects. The Swedish historians may well take pride in the dignity, unanimity, and humanity of this great national movement, which offers so marked and pleasing a contrast to the dreadful convulsions that, both in England and France, followed the dethronement of the reigning monarch, and the hideous royal murders by which they were both consummated.—See BIGNON, viii. 164; and MONTGAILLARD, vi. 397, 398.

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period, as well it might, to the contest in the Scandinavian peninsula. The cabinet of St Petersburg was inexorable; the entire cession of Finland was resolved on; and on these terms peace was at length concluded on the 17th of September. By this treaty Russia acquired Finland, the isles of Aland, Savollax, Quirille, and some lesser ones in the Baltic, and the whole province of West Bothnia, as far as Tornea, at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, and from thence, by the course of the river Jocki, almost to the shores of the Frozen Ocean. The cabinet of Stockholm also declared its accession to the Continental System; and in return for so many concessions, the duchy of Pomerania was restored to the Swedish crown, and Prince Holstein Augustenburg, son of the Duke of Holstein Augustenburg, was declared the Crown Prince, or, in other words, the successor to the throne. This treaty was shortly afterwards followed by the conclusion of a treaty between Sweden and France, the only remarkable feature of which was the extraordinary rigour with which the Continental System was imposed upon the Swedish monarchy.¹

¹ See the treaties in Marten's Sup. i. 19, 232. Ilard. x. 288, 290. Bign. viii. 168, ix. 201.

The flames of war appeared now to be finally stilled on the shores of the Baltic; and Sweden, adhering to the policy of endeavouring to procure a counterpoise in the friendship of France against the exorbitant power of Russia, had made secret proposals to Napoleon for an alliance between the Prince Augustenburg, the heir-apparent to the throne, and a princess of the imperial family of France. This proposition, however, was coldly received by Napoleon, who had no inclination to precipitate the contest which he saw would sooner or later arise with the Russian empire. But all these projects were rendered abortive by the sudden death of the young prince, who was seized with a stroke of apoplexy on horseback, when reviewing a regiment of guards at Quidinge in Holstein, and died immediately after. This unexpected event, as it deprived Sweden of a successor to the throne, immediately opened up a vast field for intrigue in the north of Europe; and various efforts were made to procure the election of different persons to the dignity, which should secure the ultimate ascent to the Swedish throne.² The right of election was vested in the States of Sweden; but it was

22.

Death of the Crown Prince of Sweden.

May 13, 1810.

² St Donat, i. 119. Bign. ix. 207. Ilard. xi. 123.

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23.
Intrigues for
the election
of his suc-
cessor. Part
which France
and Russia
took in them.

easy to see that they would be swayed by external influence in their choice, and the two powers between whom the contest necessarily lay, were France and Russia.

It was obviously the interest of Russia to place on the throne of Sweden a prince who might incline to its protection in any political crisis that might arise, and the secret wishes of that power lay towards the young prince, son of the late King. But there was an obvious difficulty in obtaining the consent of the Swedish parliament to a measure, the effect of which might be to involve almost all the leading men in the kingdom, at some future period, in the penalties of high-treason. The principal object of Napoleon was to secure, in the successor to the Swedish throne, some counterpoise to the power of the Czar; for, amidst all the professions of mutual regard by the two emperors, their interests had already begun to clash, and symptoms of estrangement already appeared in their diplomatic intercourse with each other. Candidates, however, were not wanting for the situation. The King of Denmark openly aspired to the honour, and endeavoured to impress upon Napoleon the great political advantage which would arise to France from the union of the three crowns of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, on one head, as a counterpoise to the power of Russia. But the King of Sweden, well aware that such a project would be viewed with extreme repugnance by the nobles and people of Sweden, who were actuated by a jealousy of very old standing towards their Danish and Norwegian neighbours, inclined towards the young prince of Holstein Augustenburg, younger brother of the prince who had just perished. In a secret correspondence with Napoleon, he disclosed his wishes to the Emperor, who professed himself favourable to the design, and gave the most flattering assurances of his support; observing, in particular, the advantages it would bring to both countries to have the royal families of Sweden and Denmark united by closer ties. But the King of Denmark, who was brother-in-law to the Prince of Augustenburg, prohibited him from acceding to the wishes of the King of Sweden, and openly set forth his own pretensions to the dignity, in a letter to the latter monarch.¹

Matters were still in a state of uncertainty at Stock-

¹ Letter
Prince of
Holstein to
Charles XIII.
July 17; and
King of Den-
mark to King
of Sweden,
July 18, 1810.
Bign. ix. 210,
213.

holm, when an article in the *Journal des Débats*, which at that period was entirely under the direction of the cabinet of the Tuileries, openly avowed that the election of the King of Denmark to the Swedish throne would be agreeable to the French Emperor. No sooner was this paper received in Sweden than it produced the greatest consternation. The leading men in that kingdom at once saw that they were about to be sacrificed to the balance of power in Northern Europe, and that, under the pretence of the necessity of providing a counterpart in that quarter to the exorbitant power of Russia, by uniting the three Baltic crowns on one head, they were in effect to be subjected to the rule of their old and inveterate enemies. Colonel Surenaim, a Frenchman by birth, but long aide-de-camp to the present King of Sweden, let fall the expression in the midst of the general disquietude—"The lowest French general would be better received here than the King of Denmark." Many examples had recently occurred of the elevation of French generals to European thrones; and the Swedes were too clearsighted not to perceive that possibly, by the election of such an officer, they might, without hazard to their own independence, secure the powerful support of France against the encroachments of Russia.¹

A powerful party in Sweden, accordingly, turned their eyes to Bernadotte, who commanded the large French army on the shores of the Baltic, and who, as already mentioned, had gained the affections of a great number of the best families in Sweden, from his kindness to a body of Swedish prisoners taken in the Polish war of 1807. A committee of twelve was, according to the form of the Swedish law, appointed to recommend a successor to the Diet; and at first, eleven votes declared for the young Prince of Augustenburg, and only one for Bernadotte. Before the final day of election a French agent arrived at Oerebro, where the Diet sat, and announced, though, as it was afterwards asserted, without any authority, that the wishes of Napoleon were in favour of the election of his victorious general. This intelligence immediately altered the determination of the committee. At the public election, a few days afterwards, ten of the twelve voted for Bernadotte, and their choice was confirmed by the

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24.
Napoleon
declares in
favour of the
King of Den-
mark.¹ Montg.
vii. 28, 29.
Bign. ix. 22.25.
But the
Swedes elect
Bernadotte.

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¹ Napoleon
to the King of
Sweden.
Sept. 6, 1810.
Bign. ix. 222,
228. Montg.
vii. 28, 31.

Swedish Diet. He was soon after adopted as son by Charles XIII.: and, as soon as Napoleon received the intelligence, although he expressed his surprise at it, and wrote to his ambassador at St Petersburg that he would have preferred to see the King of Denmark on the throne, yet he nevertheless advised Bernadotte to accept the dignity of the Crown Prince, and advanced him a million of francs for the expenses immediately consequent upon it.¹*

Charles John Bernadotte, Prince of Pontecorvo, and ultimately King of Sweden, was born at Pau, in Bearn, in the south of France, on the 6th of January 1764. He was the son of a lawyer, and first embraced the profession of arms by entering as a private in the regiment of royal marines.† In that capacity he served in India during the American war, and was present at the taking of Pondicherry. Upon returning to Europe, when peace was concluded between France and England in 1783, he thought seriously of quitting the service, and embracing the profession of the law in his native town; but he was prevented by the favour of his colonel, who fixed the destinies of the young soldier, by promoting the future marshal of France and king of Sweden to the rank of sergeant. At the breaking out of the Revolution in 1792, he enjoyed the satisfaction, at Marseilles, of rescuing from a ferocious mob the colonel who had promoted him, and saving his life at the hazard of his own. When war commenced in 1792, he distinguished himself in several combats in Flanders, and had attained to the rank of a

26.
His early
history.

* Although Napoleon immediately disavowed the agent at Oerebro who had used his name in this transaction, and although the Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to the French ambassador at Stockholm, that "he could not bring himself to believe that that individual would have had the impudence to declare himself invested with any diplomatic mission, or authorised to make the least insinuation relative to the election;" yet it is more than probable that that agent was in fact authorised by the French Emperor, who adopted that method of securing the elevation of one of his generals to the throne of a monarchy bordering on Russia, without openly committing himself in his cause. It is extremely improbable that any unauthorised individual would have ventured to interfere in such a transaction, and still more unlikely that the French Minister at Oerebro would have been the dupe of an impostor. The extreme anxiety which Napoleon evinced for some time afterwards to convince the cabinet of St Petersburg that he had taken no concern in this election, only renders it the more probable that he was in reality at the bottom of the transaction.—See HARD. xi. 127, 128; BIGNON, ix. 226, 228.

† When he put on his uniform in this regiment at Pau, he exchanged in a frolic his dress with that of a companion, who at the same moment had entered the regiment. The latter in giving him his uniform, said, "Go, I make you a Marshal of France."—ST DONAT, i. 122.

general of brigade, at the battle of Fleurus, in 1794. He continued to signalise himself in the war on the frontier, particularly at the passage of the Rhine at Niederworth, in the year 1796. In 1797 he was repeatedly noticed in the war with Austria, especially at the passage of the Piave, and in the siege of the fortress of Gradiska. In June 1798, he was appointed ambassador at Vienna, and soon after married the daughter of a merchant at Marseilles, of the name of Clary. In 1799 he refused the command of the army in Italy, and took the command of that on the Upper Rhine, where he soon reduced Manheim, and, in the end of June in that year, he was appointed minister of war at Paris.¹

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To the zeal and ability which he displayed in restoring the shattered ranks of the republican armies, Napoleon was mainly indebted, as already observed, for his astonishing success at Marengo.* But he was dismissed from the office of minister of war by Napoleon, to whom his sturdy republican opinions had proved highly obnoxious, on the occasion of the 18th of Brumaire. Napoleon, however, who was aware of his abilities, afterwards appointed him to the head of the army which invaded Hanover in 1803; in 1804 he was made a marshal of the empire; in 1805 the corps which he commanded had a great share in the successes of Ulm, whither Bernadotte had led it from Hanover; in 1806 he was distinguished in the campaign of Jena, and effected the destruction of Blucher's corps at Lubeck; and, after the peace of Tilsit, he received from Napoleon the military command of the Hanse Towns. He was immediately afterwards intrusted with the formation of a Saxon corps at Dresden, which took part in the battle of Wagram, and the address to whom, from their commander, as already shown, excited in a peculiar manner the indignation of the French Emperor.† After this he fell into disgrace, and it was without the knowledge of Napoleon that he was sent by the minister of war from Paris to arrest the progress of the English on the banks of the Scheldt, after the taking of Flushing.² Napoleon, after he learned the election of his old lieutenant to the rank of

1 St Donat,
i. 121, 159.
Montg. vii.
31.

27.
Causes which
brought him
into celebrity.

2 St Donat.
i. 121, 159.
Hard. xi. 127.
Montg. vii.
31. Biog.
Univ. Sup.
lvii. (Bernadotte.)

* *Ante*, Chap. xxxi. § 61.

† *Ibid.* Chap. lix. § 60.

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Crown Prince of Sweden, had an interview with him, at which, though warmly solicited, he refused to absolve him from his oath of allegiance to France. Bernadotte, however, was firm ; and, after some altercation, Napoleon yielded, and dismissed him with these words : " Well—be it so : set off. Let our destinies be accomplished."

28.
His character
as a general.

It need hardly be said that he must have been a most remarkable man who thus raised himself from the rank of a private soldier to that of marshal of France and king of Sweden ; and still more, who, after the fall of Napoleon and the general overthrow of the Revolutionary authorities in Europe, could succeed in maintaining his place upon the throne, amidst the fall of all the other potentates who had owed their elevation to the Emperor's triumphs. In truth, Bernadotte was unquestionably one of the ablest men of the age, fruitful as it was in the greatest ability and the most heroic characters. He was gifted by nature, not merely with the most intrepid courage, but with an uncommon degree of calmness in danger, which early attracted the notice of his comrades, and was the principal cause of his rapid elevation in the Revolutionary armies. Difficulties never found him unprepared, dangers always found him undaunted. He belonged in early life to the extreme republican party, and was so closely allied with many of the worst characters in the Revolution, that he narrowly escaped destruction on occasion of the revolution in 1799, which elevated Napoleon to the throne. But, fortunately for Bernadotte, his duties in the army kept him, in general, far removed from the atrocities of the Revolution ; and his democratic principles, however strong, were not so deeply rooted but that they readily gave place to the suggestions of individual elevation. He was ambitious, and, like most of the other marshals, little scrupulous in the means which he adopted to increase his fortune ; but though rapacious when accident or success gave him the means of plunder, he had nothing cruel or vindictive in his disposition ; and he was mainly indebted for his elevation to the throne of Charles XII. to the kindness which he showed to the Swedish prisoners in the war of 1807.

After his destiny was fixed, he attached himself in good earnest to the interests of Sweden. The unbearable

arrogance of Napoleon combined with the influence of the monarchy to which he had been elected to make him espouse the cause of Russia in the great struggle which ensued in 1812 between France and that power. And although afterwards, when the fortunes of Napoleon appeared on the wane, he evinced a natural repugnance to push his old general to extremities, and was only held to his engagements by the strenuous efforts of the British envoy at his headquarters, Lord Londonderry, yet equity must perhaps rather approve than condemn a feeling which, when the interests of his adopted country were secured, led him to incline to that of his birth. He was gifted with remarkable conversational talents, and shared in all the disposition to vanity and gasconade which belongs to the province of his birth ; but he was endowed with great penetration and solidity of judgment. His wise administration has gone far to reconcile the Norwegians to the hated government of Sweden ; and although a powerful party in the latter kingdom secretly indulge the hope of the restoration of the legitimate successor to the throne, he has done as much to transmit the crown to his posterity as can possibly be the case with a dynasty resting on a violent, even though a necessary revolution.

While these important events were occurring in the north of Europe, and determining in their ultimate effects the fate of the Scandinavian peninsula, Napoleon was pursuing, with now undisguised avidity, his career of pacific aggrandisement in the central parts of Europe. It has been already mentioned that Louis Buonaparte, unable to endure the indignities to which he was subjected by the tyrannical disposition of his imperial brother, had in July 1810 resigned the throne of Holland, which was immediately incorporated by Napoleon with the French empire ; and that the first seeds of a serious outbreak between him and the Emperor Alexander arose from the irritation produced in the breast of the latter by the preference given by Napoleon to the Archduchess Maria Louisa over the Grand-duchess Paulowna,* with whom he was also in treaty for marriage. These aggressions and causes of irritation were

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LX N.

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29.

His conduct
as a king.

30.

Continued
encroach-
ments by
Napoleon in
Central and
Northern
Europe.
July 7, 1810.* *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 9.

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Nov. 12.
1 DecreeDec. 13, 1810,
Moniteur.

Bign. ix. 335.

soon afterwards followed by others of a still more serious complexion. On the 12th of November the republic of the Valais, commanding the important passage of the Simplon into Italy, was incorporated with the French empire, upon the ground that it was a necessary consequence of the immense works which the Emperor had, for ten years, carried on in that part of the Alps.^{1*}

31.
Annexation
of the Hanse
Towns and
the Duchy of
Oldenburg to
the French
empire.
Dec. 13, 1810.

The same *senatus consultum* announced to the world other strides in the north of Germany of a still more serious and alarming character. The preamble to this part of the decree was:—"The British Orders in Council, and the Berlin and the Milan Decrees for 1806 and 1807, have torn to shreds the public law of Europe. A new order of things reigns throughout the world. New guarantees having become necessary, I have considered the union of the mouths of the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Rhine, of the Ems, the Weser, and the Elbe, to the French empire, and the establishment of an interior line of communication with the Baltic Sea, to be of the utmost importance. I have accordingly caused a plan to be prepared, which will be completed in five years, that will unite the Baltic with the Seine. Indemnity shall be given to the princes who may be injured by this great measure, which necessity commands, and which makes the right of my empire rest on the Baltic Sea." This immense measure of spoliation, which extended the limits of the French empire almost to the frontiers of Russia, involved alike the possessions of the members of Napoleon's own family, and of the relations of those independent powers which it was most his interest to have conciliated. Five hundred thousand souls were by it swept off from the dominions of the King of Westphalia, his own brother, and two hundred thousand from the territory of the Grand-duchy of Berg, which he had bestowed upon Murat.² But—what was much more serious—it swallowed up the whole possessions of the Grand-duke of Oldenburg, the brother-

² Decree,
Dec. 13, 1810.
Moniteur.
Bign. ix. 354,
359. Hard.
xi. 299, 210.
Marten's
Sup. i. 346.

* The preamble of the *senatus consultum* bore—"The union of the Valais to France is a consequence, long foreseen, of the immense works which I have been executing, for ten years past, in that part of the Alps. When, by my act of mediation, I separated the Valais from the Helvetic Confederacy, I did so from foreseeing that one day or other this union, so useful to France and Italy, could no longer be delayed. It has now become indispensable, from the distracted state of the canton, and the abuse which one part of the people has made of its sovereignty over another."—BIGNON, ix. 335, 336.

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in-law of the Emperor Alexander, and, besides entirely cutting off Prussia from the coast of the German Ocean, brought the French empire up to Lubeek, almost within sight of the Russian frontier.

32.
Jealousy of
Russia at
these en-
croachments

This monstrous encroachment of Napoleon—serious as it was from the immense extent of the territory thereby incorporated with the French empire, which extended its dominion from eighty-four to one hundred and thirty departments, and its population from thirty-six to forty-two millions of souls—excited the most violent feelings at St Petersburg, and blew into a flame those feelings of irritation which had existed in the Emperor's breast ever since the slight thrown upon his sister by the marriage of Napoleon. The encroachment, great as it was, was rendered still more alarming from the manner in which it was carried into effect; for here an immense tract in the north of Germany was at once annexed to the French empire, without either the formality of diplomatic sanction, or the right acquired by actual conquest. The French Emperor took upon himself the right to dispose of free cities and independent potentates in the north of Germany, as an eastern sultaun would of the fortunes of his dependent pashas. But, however great and unprecedented the stretch might be, it was obvious that Napoleon was prepared to make it good by the sword, and that it would be wrenched from him only by force of arms: for shortly before he had, without any apparent reverse to justify the measure, issued a decree, ordering the levy of forty-five thousand men for the service of the navy, and one hundred and twenty-five thousand men for that of the army, taken from the youth who should arrive at the age of nineteen in the years 1810 and 1811.¹

Sept. 27,
1810.
¹ Marten's
Sup. v. 347.
Moniteur,
Sept. 27,
1810. Bign.
ix. 361, 365.
Montg. vii.
39, 40.

But, in addition to this great and well-founded cause of complaint, Russia had other sources of disquietude, which were not so strongly established in sound reason, but arose rather from the apprehension that her ill-gotten gains would be wrested from her. The Grand-duchy of Warsaw was a continual object of jealousy to the cabinet of St Petersburg; and although Napoleon, as already mentioned, had done his utmost to remove their uneasiness on this head, and expressed his desire "that the name of Poland should disappear, not

33.
Apprehen-
sions of Rus-
sia of the re-
toration of
the kingdom
of Poland.

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¹ Bign. ix.
101.34.
Napoleon's
efforts to re-
move all
Alexander's
fears on that
head.
Jan. 4, 1810.

only from the political transactions of Europe, but even from the page of history;" * yet he had by no means succeeded in allaying their apprehensions. The Russian ministers saw very little of this disposition in the large augmentation which he had given to this duchy out of the spoils of the Austrian monarchy, after the treaty of Vienna in 1809; and so anxious did the Emperor Alexander become on this subject, shortly after the conclusion of the Austrian treaty, that he opened a negotiation with Napoleon, with a view to the conclusion of a convention which should for ever allay all the fears which he felt on the subject.¹

A convention, accordingly, was drawn up, which Champagny expressly authorised Caulaincourt, the French ambassador at St Petersburg, to sign, which was done accordingly, early in 1810, whereby it was expressly stipulated "that the kingdom of Poland shall *never be re-established*. The high contracting parties mutually agree, that the name of Poland and Poles shall never in future be applied to any of the districts, or inhabitants, who formerly composed the kingdom of Poland, and that that name shall *be effaced for ever from every public and official act*; the Polish orders of chivalry shall be abolished; and the Grand-duchy of Warsaw shall never be extended over any farther portion of what formerly constituted the ancient kingdom of Poland." The Emperor of Russia testified the most extreme satisfaction at the conclusion of this convention, and professed his delight at again feeling himself at liberty to give free vent to his admiration of so great a man as Napoleon, and his anxious hope that his "family might occupy the French throne for ever."²

² Bign. ix.
101, 103.35.
Napoleon re-
fuses to ratify
Champagny's
convention.

Had this convention, as signed by his ambassador, been ratified by Napoleon, his destiny might possibly have been different, and his family, according to Alexander's wish, have been still on the throne of France. But the convention arrived in Paris at a critical time; when Napoleon, as already mentioned, had taken umbrage at the impediments thrown in the way of the proposals he had made for the Grand-duchess Paulowna, and when he was already in secret treaty for the Austrian Arch-

* *Ante*, Chap. ix. § 42. CHAMPAGNY to ALEXANDER, 20th Oct. 1809.

1810.

duchess.* He declined, therefore, to ratify the convention ; proposing, in lieu of the first article of it, regarding the kingdom of Poland never being re-established, to insert one "binding himself to give no encouragement to any attempt tending to its re-establishment." The Emperor of Russia, piqued at this declinature, the more so as it occurred at the very time of the slight thrown on his sister, insisted warmly with Caulaincourt for a simple adhesion to the original convention, as it stood signed by the ambassador of France. But he never could achieve this object ; and, in a private conversation with Caulaincourt, he said :—"If affairs change, it is not my fault : I will not be the first to disturb the peace of Europe : I will attack no one : but, if they come to seek me, I will defend myself."¹

May 11, 1810.
¹ Bign. ix.
90, 111. Duke
de Vicenza to
Caulaincourt.
March 11,
1810.

Napoleon, however, never could be brought to agree to a convention stipulating that the kingdom of Poland should not be restored, and he answered the Russian ministers in very warm terms when pressed on the subject. The cabinet of St Petersburg, therefore, became apprehensive that an attack on their Polish possessions was meditated by Napoleon. So serious had their fears become, that a great augmentation of their force in Poland had already taken place, extensive intrenchments had been erected at Drissa on the Dwina, capable of containing a large army ; and a new levy had been ordered throughout the vast dominions of the Czar. These defensive measures in their turn excited the jealousy of Napoleon, who with reason saw no sufficient explanation of them in the pretext alleged of the losses of the Turkish war ; and he directed his ambassador at the court of St Petersburg to demand explanations on the subject.† Alexander, on being pressed to give his reasons for these field-works, retorted by referring to the continued march of French troops, and a large park of artillery, into the

36.
Progress of
the angry
negotiations
on the sub-
ject.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxiii. § 9.

† "It is vain to dissemble, that these field-works of such extent indicate bad dispositions on the part of the Russian cabinet. After having concluded peace with the Porte, as they have soon the prospect of doing, are they about to come to an understanding with the English and violate the treaty of Tilsit ? Such a measure would at once place them in a state of hostility with France. I do not desire war ; but I will be always ready to undertake it ; and such is the posture of affairs that, to continue at peace, the Continent must make war on England as long as England makes war on France."—*NAPOLEON TO DUC DE CADORE*, (Champagny,) 5th Dec. 1810—*BIGNON*, ix. 368.

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¹ Caulaincourt to Napoleon, December 7, 1810. Bign. ix. 368, 369.

north of Germany; observed that he took no umbrage at similar defensive works at Modlin, Thorn, Warsaw, and Torgau; that the demands now made by Napoleon for a rigorous execution of the Continental System were unauthorised by any agreement; and that the only favour which he had yet asked of him not contained in the treaties, viz. a convention concerning Poland, had been refused.¹

37.
Russian commercial ukase in the end of 1810. Dec. 31, 1810.

Alexander was no sooner informed of the spoliation of the Grand-duke of Oldenburg by Napoleon, and the extension of the French empire to the shores of the Baltic, than he replied in a manner which affected Napoleon in the most sensitive point. On the 31st December 1810, he published an imperial ukase, which, under the colour of regulating the affairs of commerce, in effect contained a material relaxation of the rigour of the decrees hitherto in force in the Russian empire against English commerce. Colonial produce was admitted if under a neutral flag: a thin disguise, under which the commercial enterprise of England was soon able to veil the most extensive mercantile speculations. Many articles of French manufacture were virtually prohibited, by not being included in the list of goods which might be admitted on payment of a duty—particularly laces, bronzes, jewellery, silks, ribbons, and gauzes. These regulations were attended by an order for the establishment of a coast-guard of eighty thousand men to enforce obedience to them: a step which it might be easily seen was but a cloak for the augmentation of the regular army. In addition to this, the cabinet of St Petersburg presented a diplomatic note to all the courts in Europe, formally complaining of the annexation of the Duchy of Oldenburg to the French empire.²

² Marten's Sup. i. 348. Bign. ix. 370, 371.

38.
Napoleon resumes the kingdom of Hanover from Jerome. July 14, 1810.

The imperious disposition of Napoleon strongly appeared in the course of the year 1810, in the transactions with his brother, the new King of Westphalia. He had, by a solemn deed, made over to that monarch all the rights which he possessed by conquest over the Electorate of Hanover; under the burden, according to his usual practice, of a large portion of the revenues of the electorate, which he reserved to himself, as a fund from which to reward his favourite generals or officers, and on the condition also of throwing upon those of the King of West-

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Oct. 25, 1810.

phalia the entire expense of supporting the French troops who might ever be stationed in his territory. The payment of these French troops, however, did not proceed with great regularity ; and Napoleon made this a pretext for declaring to his brother Jerome, "that he found himself, with regret, under the necessity of resuming the administration of Hanover ; that he regarded the treaty as annulled by the King of Westphalia himself ; and that he felt himself at entire liberty to dispose of the Hanoverian territory as his interests might dictate." In effect, it was shortly after incorporated with France, under the name of the 32d military division, on occasion of the union of the Hanse Towns to the "Grande Nation."¹

¹ Bign. ix.
236, 238.

The clouds, however, which, from so many concurrent causes, were seen to be threatening the French empire in the north of Europe, were in the estimation of the Emperor more than compensated by the fortunate event which occurred at Paris in March. The Empress Maria Louisa, who had long promised an heir to the throne, on the 20th was seized with the pains of childbirth ; but though she had the aid of the most skilful medical assistance which France could afford, she suffered long and dreadfully before the delivery took place. The calm resolution of Napoleon was signally evinced on this occasion, so interesting to his feelings, and so vital to the stability of his throne. The sufferings of the Empress were so protracted and severe, that the medical attendants declared to him, that either she or the infant must perish before the delivery could be effected, and they insinuated a question which should be sacrificed. Napoleon, without hesitating an instant, replied, "Act as you would towards the wife of a burgher in the Rue St Denis : if possible, save both ; but, at all events, preserve the Empress." This bold but feeling advice was attended with a happier result than was anticipated : the infant was saved, and proved a son ; and at six in the morning, the cannon of the Invalides announced to the capital that the much-wished-for event had taken place, and that the KING of ROME was born.²

39.
Birth of the
King of
Rome, and
resolution
shown by the
Emperor on
this occasion.
March 20.

² Las Cases,
iv. 32, 34.
Thib. viii.
341.

It had been previously intimated, that if the infant were a princess, twenty-one guns only would be fired ; but if a prince, a hundred. At the first report, the whole

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40.

Enthusiastic
joy in Paris
on the occa-
sion.

inhabitants of Paris wakened, and the discharges were counted with intense interest, till, when the twenty-first gun had gone off, the anxiety of all classes had risen to an unbearable pitch. The gunners delayed an instant before the next piece was discharged, and some hundred thousand persons held their breath: but when the twenty-second, double-charged, was let off, the whole inhabitants of all ages and sexes sprang on their feet, and universal joy testified the profound hold which the Emperor had acquired of the affections of the people. Innumerable addresses were presented by the public bodies from all parts of France, in which the whole flowers of European rhetoric and Eastern adulation were exhausted, to express the universal enthusiasm at this auspicious event.¹

1 Thib. viii.
341, 342.
Montg. viii.
45, 49.

41.

Tyrannical
conduct of
Napoleon
towards
Prussia.

The secession, now hardly disguised, of Russia from the severity of the Continental System, had the effect only of rendering Napoleon more urgent in exacting the most strict and rigorous execution of his decrees from the other powers in the north of Europe. From Denmark he met with the most willing compliance, and a disposition even to anticipate his wishes in the war against the hated commerce of England; for the cabinet of Copenhagen shut her ports absolutely to all neutral vessels whatever bearing colonial produce: a measure which effectually prevented the possibility of subterfuge. Against Prussia he fulminated menacing complaints for her alleged connivance at a contraband traffic; and with such effect that the cabinet of Berlin was compelled to sign a treaty on 28th January 1811, by which it was stipulated that the Prussian confiscations of British goods should be accounted for to France, but be taken as a deduction from the amount of the Prussian debt still unpaid from the war contributions.²

2 Marten's
Sup. i. 398.

42.

And Sweden;
in regard to
the Conti-
nental Sys-
tem.

Towards the court of Sweden he assumed a still more threatening tone. He loudly complained that, under pretence of a traffic in salt, a contraband trade was still carried on in the Swedish ports in British colonial produce; and declared that he would greatly prefer open war with himself to such a state of covert communication with his enemies. "I begin to see," said he, "that I have committed a fault in consenting to the restoration of

Pomerania to Finland. Let the Swedes know that my troops shall instantly re-enter that province if the treaty is not carried into execution to the very letter.”¹ Nor was his language softened by the arrival of the new Crown Prince Bernadotte at Stockholm, and the consequent direction by him of the principal affairs of government. On the contrary, he only expected and demanded a more complete submission to his will from his former lieutenant than from an independent power. “Choose,” said he, “between cannon-shot against the English vessels which approach your coasts, and the confiscation of their merchandise, or an immediate war with France. Sweden is now doing me more mischief than the whole five coalitions put together. You tell me Sweden is suffering. Bah! Is not France suffering? Are not Bordeaux, Holland, Germany, suffering? We must all suffer to conquer a maritime peace. Sweden is the sole cause of the crisis I now experience; it must be ended: at all hazards we must conquer a maritime peace.”²

Napoleon had good reason for saying that France and her dependencies were suffering at this terrible crisis. Such was the exhaustion and stoppage of industry in the principal towns of the empire, that the paupers amounted in many places to a third, in some to two-thirds of the whole population.* In Russia, the system of paper credit was entirely ruined by the effects of the Continental System; and government paper had fallen so low, that the paper ruble in the loan negotiated with Pichler, on 27th March 1810, was estimated at just one-half of the silver ruble; and, taking this depreciation into view, the interest stipulated by the lenders in reality amounted to twenty-eight per cent.³ But, bad as this was, the financial and individual ruin in Prussia was incomparably greater. Industry was every where at a stand from the want of external commerce, and the absorption of all domestic funds in the French requisitions; the exchequer was penniless, and the national credit extinct; a strong feeling of necessity and patriotic duty alone induced the few remaining capitalists to come

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¹ Napoleon to Charles XIII. May 23, 1810.

² Napoleon to Charles XIII. Oct. 26, 1810. Bign. ix. 337, 341. Hard. xi. 129, 130.

43.

Universal misery produced by the Continental System.

³ Hard. xi. 108.

* At Rome in 1810 out of 147,000 souls were paupers 30,000
— Amsterdam of 217,000 " 80,000
— Venice, 100,000 " 70,000
— HARTENBERG, xi. 253.

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forward to enable the King to meet the rigorous demands of Napoleon's tax-gatherers. The augmentation of the troops in her territory in the course of 1810 and 1811, all of whom were fed, clothed, paid, and lodged at the expense of the bleeding state, was such as to exceed belief, if it were not attested by contemporary and authentic documents.* It may readily be conceived that it was not without extreme difficulty that such prodigious sums could, by the united efforts of the French and Prussian authorities, be extracted from the people; but here, too, the enormous power and irresistible forces of France had provided the means of extortion. The great fortress of Magdeburg had been converted into a prison for the defaulters in the state contributions from all the surrounding provinces; and into that huge bastille, Davoust, at the head of an army of seventy thousand men, incessantly poured new shoals of victims. Yet in spite of all their efforts, the demands of France could not be satisfied; and the books of Daru, the inspector-general of accounts, exhibited a continual and hopeless array of arrears undischarged, and debt accumulating.¹

¹ Hard. xi.
239, 249, 251.
Schoell, x.
99, 100.

44.
Treaties be-
tween France
and Prussia.

Feb. 24, 1812.

It may readily be conceived that, in these circumstances, Prussia would willingly have thrown off her fetters, if she could have done so with the slightest prospect of success. But such was the prostration and exhaustion of the country, and the universal terror excited by the arms of Napoleon, that the boldest heads and warmest hearts in that country could see no other mode of prolonging the national existence, and averting the immediate stroke of fate, but by a close alliance with, and unqualified submission to, his government. Under the influence of these feelings, and overawed on the one hand by the violent seizure of Swedish Pomerania, which Marshal Davoust entered in February 1812, and immediately overran at the head of twenty thousand men, and on the other by the dread of the resumption of Silesia by its old owner

* In a secret report by Chancellor Hardenberg to Baron Krusemark, by order of the King, on 30th August 1811, it was stated, "the Saxon army was cantoned within two days' march of the King's palace; Dantzic alone contains an army, in lieu of the ten thousand men stipulated by the treaties; France has augmented the troops on the Oder to twenty-three thousand men, and their support alone costs the state two hundred and fifty thousand francs a-month. The garrison of Stettin has been augmented to seventeen thousand five hundred men."—*Report, BARON HARDENBERG, 30th August 1811; HARDENBERG, xi. 251.*

Austria, now in close alliance with France, the cabinet of Berlin not only acceded to, but invited, the conclusion of a treaty of the closest kind with France. It was entered into, accordingly, and stipulated that there should be an alliance offensive and defensive between the two monarchs: that they should mutually guarantee the integrity of each other's territories; and that the Continental System should be enforced with the utmost rigour in all the Prussian harbours. It was provided, however, in secret articles, that the contingent of Prussia, which was fixed at twenty thousand men, and sixty guns, besides twenty thousand men in garrison, "should not be exigible on account of any wars in which the Emperor might engage beyond the Pyrenees, in Italy, or *Turkey*." In addition to this, the most minute stipulations were inserted, in separate conventions, concerning the march of troops through the Prussian territories, the supplies which were to be furnished to them, and the co-operation of Prussia in the projected war with Russia. The effects of this treaty soon appeared in the entrance of a hundred and eighty thousand infantry, and seventy thousand cavalry, which spread like a deluge through the Prussian territory, occupied all its fortresses, and devoured, like a cloud of locusts, the whole remaining resources of the country; while the Prussian contingent of twenty thousand men was, in a manner, drowned in the prodigious multitude by which it was surrounded. Shortly after, the French general, Durutte, was appointed governor of Berlin; and a royal edict prohibited the introduction of colonial produce, on any pretence, from the Russian into the Prussian territory.¹

This treaty was immediately followed by another between France and the cabinet of Vienna, which not only relieved Napoleon of all anxiety regarding the latter power, but put a considerable part of her resources at his command. Austria, since the peace of Vienna, had been treated in a very different manner from the dominions of Frederick William, or the lesser German states: her territory was respected, her fortresses were garrisoned by her own troops, and the arrears of contributions collected and remitted by her own authorities. The same difference appeared in the treaty which was concluded between the

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¹ See treaty in Marten's Sup. i. 414, and secret articles, in Hard. xi. 325, 326, and Schoell, x. 116, 120.

45.
And with Austria.

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March 14,
1812.

cabinet of Vienna and that of the Tuileries. Austria was to furnish an auxiliary force of thirty thousand men, and sixty pieces of cannon; the integrity of the dominions of the Sublime Porte was secured against Russia; the two powers mutually guaranteed each other's dominions, and concluded an alliance offensive and defensive. By another secret treaty, which was attended with most important effects in the sequel, it was provided that the *casus fœderis* should not apply to the war beyond the Pyrenees, but expressly to one with Russia; that the province of Galicia should be guaranteed to Austria, even in the event of the kingdom of Poland being restored; that part of Galicia specified in the treaty might in that event be exchanged for the Illyrian provinces; and that due compensation, in the shape of an adequate aggrandisement of territory, should be provided for Austria in the event of a prosperous issue of the war. Turkey was to be invited to accede to the confederacy; and Prince Swartzenberg, still ambassador at Paris, was appointed to the command of the army.¹

¹ See treaty in Marten's Sup. i. 427, and in Schoell, x. 123, 124.

46.
Perfidious policy of Napoleon in these treaties.

Nothing can paint Napoleon's astute policy better than these treaties. While in the secret treaty with Prussia he expressly provides for the case of a French war with *Turkey*, which he clearly contemplated, and which was declared not to be within the *casus fœderis*,—by the secret treaty with Austria, at the very same time, he disarmed the fears of the latter power on the Ottoman question, by expressly guaranteeing the *integrity of the Ottoman dominions*, and inviting that power to accede to the general league against Russia. And while in his negotiations with Russia relative to the much-desired convention regarding Poland, he again and again expressed his readiness to sign an engagement "*not to favour any design tending to the re-establishment of the kingdom of Poland*," he at the same time, in the secret treaty with Austria, provided for that very restoration, and stipulated the indemnity which she was to receive in the Illyrian provinces for any *Polish* cessions she might be required to make for its completion.

While Napoleon was thus fortifying himself, by the accession of Austria and Prussia, for the great and decisive struggle which was approaching, England and

Russia, on their part, were not idle; and an ally was gained for the cause of European independence in a quarter where it could least have been anticipated, but whose co-operation proved, in the end, of decisive importance in the subsequent contest. Sweden, farther removed from the scene of danger, and more deeply interested than either Prussia or Austria in the preservation of foreign commerce, from the sterility of its territory, was not so immediately under the control of Napoleon; and both Charles XIII. and Bernadotte justly apprehended the overthrow of their infant dynasty, if they acceded, in all their rigour, to the imperious demands of the French Emperor for war with England, and the exclusion of British manufactures from the Swedish harbours. M. Alquier, the French ambassador at Stockholm, never ceased to urge, in the most menacing manner, in the latter months of 1810, the necessity of an immediate choice of either a war with France, which would be followed by the conquest of Pomerania, or the immediate commencement of hostilities with England. To these demands Bernadotte answered, that a war with England would almost entirely destroy the Swedish revenue; that the Estates of the kingdom would not submit to any direct imposition; that the arsenals, in consequence of the disastrous issue of the late war with Russia, were empty; that salt, an article of primary necessity to Sweden, could only be obtained from England; that the fleet at Carlserona could not possibly be got to sea without a great expenditure; and that, so far from having the funds requisite for that purpose, the government had not even wherewithal to put the fortifications of that harbour in a state of defence against the English fleet.¹

Napoleon's reply to these representations was in his usual laconic and imperious style. "You tell me that you wish to remain at peace with France, but I say, let me have proofs of this disposition. Foreign commerce is the present *cheval de bataille* of all nations. I can immediately cause you to be attacked by the Danes and Russians; and I will instantly do so if in fifteen days you are not at war with England. I have been long enough the dupe of Sweden as well as of Prussia; but the latter

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47.

War forced
on Sweden
against Eng-
land.

¹ Bernadotte
to Napoleon,
Nov. 19, and
Dec. 8, 1810.
Schoell, x.
94, 96. Hard.
xi. 128, 134.

48.

Napoleon's
laconic reply.

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1810.

¹ Napoleon
to Bernadotte
Nov. 11, 1810,
Hard. xi. 120.
Schoell, x.
94, 96.

power has at last learned, by the catastrophe of Holland, that it was necessary to take a decided line. I cannot reckon always on the alliance of Russia. I loved the King of Holland, but nevertheless I confiscated his dominions, because he would not obey my will. I did the same with the Swiss. They hesitated on confiscating the English goods: I marched my troops into their dominions, and they soon obeyed. On the fifth day from this, war must be declared, or my ambassador has orders to demand his passports. Open war, or a sincere alliance. These are my last words." Napoleon remained perfectly deaf to all their representations: and as he left them no alternative, war was declared by Sweden against England in the middle of November 1810.¹

49.
Alienation of
Sweden in
consequence
of the over-
bearing de-
mands of
Napoleon.

The Swedish government, however, soon found that their condition was by no means ameliorated by their declaring war against England, so far as France was concerned; and they had ample opportunity of contrasting the manner in which they were treated by the English, against whom they had declared, and France, for whose alliance they had made such ruinous sacrifices. Feigning to be ignorant of the Swedish declaration of war, the British cruisers committed no hostilities on the Swedish merchantmen; but, on the other hand, the French captured them without mercy, under pretence that they were trading with England, and were not furnished with French licenses, confiscated the cargoes, and threw the seamen into prison. Meanwhile Napoleon demanded two thousand sailors from Sweden; and as they were not immediately furnished, he insisted upon them sending twelve thousand. Bernadotte answered, that Sweden had iron in its harbours to the value of a million sterling; and that, if Napoleon would take that instead of the seamen, it would be some relief to Swedish industry; but the Emperor declined this, alleging that he had plenty of iron without going to Sweden for it. He next insisted that French customhouse officers should be established at Gottenburg, and that Sweden should accede to a northern confederacy like that of the Rhine, of which he himself was to be the head, and which was to consist of Sweden, Denmark, and the Grand-duchy of Warsaw. But the Swedish monarch, aware of the change which

Dec. 26, 1810.

Dec. 31.

June 9, 1811.

had taken place in the close of 1810 in the policy of the Russian cabinet, and feeling his dependence upon Russia and England, both for his resources and his existence, declined the proposal. The consequence was, that, early in January 1812, Napoleon entered Pomerania, overran the whole country, seized the fortress of Stralsund, confiscated all the Swedish ships in the harbour, imposed enormous contributions on the inhabitants, and armed all the merchant vessels in the harbours as privateers against the English commerce; while the French civil authorities, who every where, like vultures, followed in the rear of their armies, established themselves in the whole country, and began to levy contributions for the use of the imperial treasury.¹

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Jan. 27, 1812.

¹ Schoell, ix.
96, 101.
Hard. xi. 131,
135.

This last act of hostility, following on so long a train of injuries, determined the policy of the Swedish cabinet. Bernadotte lent a willing ear to the suggestions of Russia; and on the 5th and 8th of April 1812, treaties were concluded between the courts of St Petersburg and Stockholm, by which the two contracting parties mutually guaranteed each other's possessions: and it was stipulated on the one hand, that, in the event of a war with France, Sweden was to assist Russia with a corps of thirty thousand men, who were to operate, in conjunction with twenty thousand Russians, in the north of Germany; and that, in return, the Emperor of Russia was to guarantee Norway to Sweden, upon Denmark receiving an adequate indemnity in Pomerania; and, in the event of the latter power refusing to agree to this exchange, Russia was to aid Sweden with thirty-five thousand men to conquer Norway. These treaties were shortly afterwards secretly communicated to the British government, from whom they met with the most favourable reception. Lord Wellesley, and subsequently Lord Castlereagh, who succeeded him in the direction of foreign affairs, exerted themselves to the utmost to promote these amicable dispositions; and, in consequence, a treaty of peace was concluded between Great Britain and Sweden, at Oerebro, on the 12th of July 1812; the British harbours were immediately opened to the Swedish vessels, and amicable relations re-established between the two countries. When Napoleon discovered that Sweden was inclining to

50.

The Swedish
government
allies itself
with Russia
and Great
Britain.
April 5, 1812.

July 12, 1812.

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1812.

¹ Schoell, x.
101, 107.
Marten's Sup.
i. 431.

the Russian alliance, he made the most vigorous efforts to endeavour to regain the former power to his own interest. For this purpose he offered to evacuate Pomerania, on condition that Sweden should aid him with thirty-five thousand men in his attack upon Russia ; and if they did so, he offered to restore to them Finland, and admit them into a participation of the benefits of the Confederation of the Rhine. But it was too late. Sweden had taken her part, and formed a sound judgment as to the real interests of her subjects ; and the proposals, therefore, were rejected, even though supported by all the influence of the Austrian minister at the court of Stockholm.¹

51.
Napoleon's
vast military
preparations.
March 13.

Previous to engaging in hostilities, Napoleon's preparations were of so extensive a kind as indicated his sense of the magnitude of the contest in which he was about to engage. By a decree of the senate, of the 13th of March 1812, the whole male population of France capable of bearing arms was divided into three bans ; a hundred cohorts of the first of which were to be immediately organised and put into active service, to guard the coast and frontier fortresses ; and the two others were to be disciplined and equipped, without leaving their respective departments, but ready to take the field when called on for the service of their country. By these means, it was calculated that a reserve of one million two hundred thousand men could be raised to assist the Emperor's already gigantic forces.²

² Moniteur,
March 13,
1812. Bign.
x. 172. Thib.
viii. 372, 374.

52.
Napoleon's
proposals of
peace to the
English gov-
ernment.
April 17.

According to his usual custom, when about to commence the most serious hostilities, Napoleon made proposals of peace to England. The terms now offered were, that the integrity of Spain should be guaranteed ; that France should renounce all extension of her empire on the side of the Pyrenees ; that the "reigning dynasty" in Spain should be declared independent, and the country governed by the national constitution of the Cortes ; that the independence and security of Portugal should be guaranteed, and the House of Braganza reign in that kingdom ; that the kingdom of Naples should remain in the hands of its present ruler, and that of Sicily with its existing king ; and that Spain, Portugal, and Italy should be evacuated by the French and British troops, both by land and sea. To these proposals, Lord Castlereagh replied, that if by

April 23.

the term "reigning dynasty," the French government meant the royal authority of Spain and its government, as now vested in Joseph Buonaparte and the Cortes assembled under his authority, and not the government of Ferdinand VII., the true monarch of Spain, and the Cortes assembled by his authority, no negotiation could be admitted on such a basis. No reply was made by Napoleon to this answer; and it is evident that the proposal was made with no real prospect of an accommodation, but merely to sow suspicion between the courts of London and St Petersburg, or to give him the advantage which he always desired, of being able to hold out to Europe, at the commencement of a new war, that he had in vain made proposals of accommodation to his enemies.¹

When hostilities had been thus long and openly anticipated between France and Russia, it is of little moment to inquire what were the immediate and ostensible grounds which led to rupture between the two powers. Down to the very commencement of hostilities, notes continued to be interchanged between Champagny and Romanzoff, which did little more than recapitulate the mutual grounds of complaint of the two cabinets against each other. Napoleon continually reproached Russia with the imperfect execution of the Continental System, the imperial ukase of the 31st December 1810, the armaments in the interior of Russia, and the fortifications on the Dwina; the transference of powerful forces from the Danube to the Niemen; and the protest of Alexander against the incorporation of the duchy of Oldenburg with the French empire. On the other hand, the ministers of Russia represented that these measures, though apparently hostile, were defensive merely, rendered necessary by the immense accumulation of French troops in Poland and the north of Germany, the invasion of Swedish Pomerania, the extension of the French empire over the whole Hanse Towns and to the Baltic Sea, and the incorporation of the duchy of Oldenburg with Napoleon's empire. Nevertheless, Alexander offered to come to an accommodation, and dismiss his warlike armaments, on condition that France would evacuate Prussia and Swedish Pomerania, reduce the garrison of Dantzic, and come to an arrangement with the King of Sweden.² This ultimatum remained

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¹ Schoell, x.
128, 129.
Parl Deb.
xxii. 1074,
1075.

54.
Final negoti-
ation between
France and
Russia.

April 24,
1812.
¹ Maret to
Romanzoff,
April 25,
1812. Kou-
rakin to
Maret, April
24, 1812.
Schoell, x.
130, 135.
Hard. xi. 371,
375.

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without any answer on the part of the French government, and it was soon sufficiently evident that the decision of both sovereigns had been finally come to ; for on the 29th April Alexander arrived at Wilna, and in the middle of May Napoleon set out for Dresden.

54.
Views with
which the
contest was
regarded in
Europe.

All Europe was held in anxious suspense by the evident approach of the dreadful conflict which had so long been preparing between these two colossal empires, which were thus about to bring the whole forces of Christendom into the contest. Influenced, however, by the calamitous issue of all former wars against Napoleon, but slender hopes were entertained of any successful result of this last resistance now attempted in the north. The power of Napoleon appeared too great to be withstood by any human efforts ; even the strongest heads and the boldest hearts could anticipate no other issue from the war than the final prostration of Russia, the conquest of Turkey, and the establishment of French supremacy from the English Channel to the Black Sea. The English still followed with intense interest the energetic career of Wellington in the Peninsula ; but his fate too, it was evident, was wrapped up in the issue of the approaching contest ; and they were sanguine indeed who could hope for any thing but disaster to the British arms if Napoleon, victorious over Russia and Turkey, were to bring back his conquering legions from the Vistula and the Danube to the banks of the Ebro. A general despair in consequence seized the minds of men ; it seemed doubtful if even the British navy in the end could secure the independence of this favoured isle : and the general subjugation of the whole civilised world was anticipated—probably to be rescued from slavery only by a fresh deluge of northern barbarians.

CHAPTER LXXI.

DESCRIPTION OF RUSSIA, AND PREPARATIONS FOR
THE WAR.

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE is a state of such vast strength and boundless resources, that it is obviously destined to make a great and lasting impression on human affairs. Its progress has been slow ; but it is only on that account the more likely to be durable. It has not suddenly risen to greatness—like the empire of Alexander in ancient, or of Napoleon in modern times—from the force of individual genius, or the accident of casual fortune, but has slowly advanced and been firmly consolidated during a succession of ages, from the combined influence of ambition skilfully directed, and energy perseveringly applied. It received its greatest development from the French Revolution. The experience acquired, and the spirit called forth during the contest for its existence, doubled its power ; and the cloud which had hitherto overshadowed in obscure and gloomy grandeur the north of Europe, now emerged, like the genie in the Eastern fable, an armed giant, from the stroke of Napoleon.

There is no example in the annals of the world of an empire thus slowly and steadily advancing to greatness, which has not long endured, and left indelible traces of its power on the pages of history. The probable length of life may be anticipated with tolerable certainty to national, not less than individual existence ; it is in the duration of growth and adolescence, that the measure of future maturity and decay is to be found. Experience proves that this is not a mere fanciful analogy, suggested by the obvious resemblance of the growth of communities

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1.
Slow but
steady growth
of the Rus-
sian empire.

2.
Analogy in
this respect
of the physi-
cal and moral
world.

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to that of single men, but a fixed law of nature—a part of that mysterious unity of design which runs through every part of creation, and blends together the minutest object in the material, with the sublimest combinations in the moral world. If we compare the winged insect, which is called into perfect being with the first rays of the summer sun, and runs through its brilliant span of existence before his orb has set in the west, with the majestic growth of the oak, which beholds successive generations of men expire under its increasing boughs, and stands forth after the lapse of seven centuries a still undecayed remnant of olden time—we shall have a lively image of those ephemeral dynasties which glitter awhile in the rays of fortune, “a moment bright, then lost for ever,” contrasted with those more durable powers—like Rome in ancient, or Britain and Russia in modern times—which, slowly but steadily advancing through a long course of ages, derive only additional strength from prosperous, and increased fortitude from adverse times.

3.
Extent and
statistics of
the Russian
empire.

The extent and fertility of the Russian territory are such as to furnish facilities of increase and elements of strength which no other nation in the world enjoys. European Russia—that is, Russia to the westward of the Ural mountains—contains a hundred and fifty thousand four hundred square marine leagues, or about one million two hundred thousand square geographical miles—being ten times the surface of the British islands, which contain, including Ireland, one hundred and twenty-two thousand. Great part, no doubt, of this immense territory is covered with forest, or lies so far to the north as to be almost unproductive of food; but no ranges of mountains or arid deserts intersect the vast extent, and almost the whole, excepting that which touches the Arctic snows, is capable of yielding something for the use of man. The boundless steppes of the south present inexhaustible fields of pasturage, and give birth to those nomad tribes, in whose numerous and incomparable horsemen the chief defence of the empire, as of all oriental states, is to be found. The rich arable plains in the heart of the empire produce an incalculable quantity of grain, capable not only of maintaining four times its present inhabitants, but affording a vast surplus for expor-

tation by the Dnieper, the Wolga, and their tributary streams, which form so many natural outlets into the Mediterranean Sea; while the cold and shivering plains which stretch towards Archangel and the shores of the White Sea, are covered with immense forests of oak and fir, furnishing at once inexhaustible materials for shipbuilding and supplies of fuel, which, for many generations, will supersede the necessity of searching in the bowels of the earth for the purposes of warmth or manufactures for the inhabitants of the empire.^{1*}

It is stated by Humboldt—and the fact gives us an almost overpowering idea of the extent of the savannahs of the New World—that while one end of the pampas of Buenos Ayres is charged with the snows of the antarctic circle, the other is overshadowed by the palm-trees of the tropics.² The dominions of the Czar, even in Europe, afford an example of an extent of almost level surface, stretching over an equally broad space of the globe. While, in its northern extremities, the cold is so intense, and vegetation in consequence so stunted, that a birch-tree, full grown and of perfect form, can be carried in the palm of the hand; in its southern latitudes, the vine, the apricot, and the peach, ripen on the sunny slopes of the Crimea, and fields of roses, which perfume the air for miles around, flower in luxuriant beauty on the shores of the Danube. In the northern provinces, corn withers, pasture is scanty, and the marshy meadows yield only a crop of mosses and rushes; trees dwindle to shrubs, and at last entirely disappear on the sterile plains; the plants are stunted, and the whole of vegetable nature proclaims the vicinity to the pole.†

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¹ Malte Brun, vi. 638, 639. Hassel's Tables of Russian empire.

4. Surprising variety of climate, and extent of latitude in Russia.
² Humboldt, vi. 67.

* The extent of the forests in the northern provinces of Russia is almost inconceivable. From actual measurement, it appears that, in the three governments of Vologda, Archangel, and Olonitz alone, there are 216,000,000 acres of pine and fir—being about three times the whole surface of the British islands, which contain 77,000,000. In one government alone, there are 47,000,000 acres of forest. It appears from M. Hermann's calculations, that there are in thirty-one governments in the north of Russia, 8,195,295 firs well adapted for large masts, each being above thirty inches in diameter—a number more than sufficient for a long supply of all the fleets in the world—besides 86,869,000 fit for building houses. In twenty-two governments only, there are 374,804 large oaks, each more than twenty-six inches in diameter, and 229,570,000 of a smaller size.—See *Trans. de l'Academie Imperiale de St Petersburg*, viii. 172-184; and MALTE BRUN, vi. 632; and BRENNER'S *Russia*, ii. 31.

† "Orbis in extremi jacens desertus arenis
Fert ubi perpetua obruta terra nives.
Non ager hic pomum, non dulces educat uvas;
Non salices ripâ, robora monte virent.

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Farther to the south, vast forests of pine overspread the surface of the earth ; but “winter still lingers in the lap of spring.” Masses of ice in caves, or under the shade of rocks, diffuse a perennial chill around ; innumerable lakes and marshes render the soil cold and unfruitful even in the height of summer ; and the earth, hidden from the sun over nineteen-twentieths of its surface by the dark shade of the fir, can hardly be made to bring scanty crops of oats and barley to maturity.¹

It is only on approaching the latitude of Moscow that grain crops are universal, and the country, as far as the eye can reach, exhibits a noble unbroken sheet of luxuriant harvests. Still farther to the south, immense steppes of verdant turf afford rich pasturage, even to the foot of the Caucasian snows ; while in the southern extremity of the Crimea, along the southern front of the Taurida range, the climate hardly differs from the opposite shores of Anatolia and Asia Minor. Winter is there hardly felt ; the primrose and the crocus appear above the earth in the month of January, and the oak retains its green foliage through the whole year. The ever-verdant laurel grows beside the olive, the fig, and the date-tree, brought in former times to these mountains by the Greek colonists ; the walnut, the peach, the nectarine, and apricot, flourish in the hanging woods, or rather natural gardens, in the valleys ; the wild vine reaches the tops of the highest trees, and, descending again to the ground, forms, with the viburnum, festoons and garlands. “High hills, masses of rock, streams and cataracts, verdant fields and woods, and the sea that bounds the landscape, render the scene,” says Pallas, “equal to any imagined or described by the poets. The simple life of the good Tartars, their cottages cut in the solid rock, and concealed by the thick foliage of the surrounding gardens ; the flute of the shepherd, his flocks scattered on solitary hills, remind the traveller of the golden age. He leaves the people with regret, and envies the destiny of mortals ignorant of war, the frauds of trade, and luxury accompanied with all its vices.”²

Neve fretum terris landes magis ; æquora semper
Ventorum rabie solibus orba tument.
Quocunque aspicias, campi cultore carentes,
Vastaque, quæ nemo vindicat, arva jacent.”

OVID.

¹ Malte Brun, vi. 443, 444, 457.

5.
Luxuriant riches of the Crimea and southern provinces.

² Pallas, Tableau Physique de la Tauride, 37. Malte Brun, vi. 389.

The productive powers of a country of such extent, and so diversified in natural advantages, may be considered as almost inexhaustible. Russia in Europe contains a twenty-eighth part of the terrestrial surface, and numbers among its subjects a fifteenth part of the human race.* If its European territory were peopled as Germany is, it would contain 150,000,000 souls; if as densely as Great Britain, which, considering the great proportion of Scotland which is mountain waste, is perhaps not beyond the bounds of possibility, it would contain 311,000,000.† The population of the whole empire, in Asia as well as Europe, at present (1847) about sixty-four millions, adds nearly a million of souls annually to its number, and doubles in somewhat above half a century.‡ Thus, before the year 1900, Russia will, to all appearance, contain 130,000,000 inhabitants; and by the year 1950, nearly 200,000,000—a rate of increase which, though it be great, appears by no means incredible, when the prodigious extent of fertile land still uncultivated is taken into consideration, and the corresponding and still more rapid augmentation of the Anglo-Saxon race in the savannahs of the New World. Nothing more is requisite to demonstrate the ascendancy which these two great families of mankind have acquired, or the durable impress which they are destined to communicate to human affairs.¹

Dominions so vast, resources so boundless, might appear sufficient even for the greatest monarchy on earth. But great as they are, they are inconsiderable when compared with the extent and capabilities of the Asiatic possessions of the empire. These amount to no

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6.

Capabilities
of Russia for
future
increase.¹ Malte Brun,
vi. 638, 643,
628. Hassel's
Stat. Tables
of Russia,
1823. Balbi's
Tables.

7.

Vast extent
and capabilities
of Asiatic
Russia.

* The globe contains 37,000,000 square geographical miles of territorial surface, of which Russia in Europe alone occupies 1,500,000, or about an eight-and-twentieth part.—MALTE BRUN, vi. 628.

† In Great Britain there are acres :—

England,	.	.	.	32,340,400
Wales,	.	.	.	4,752,000
Scotland,	.	.	.	19,738,930

56,831,330

of which 22,000,000 at present waste, and 13,000,000 irrecoverably so.—See PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 177.

‡ Mr Tooke states that, in his time, (1796,) the population of the empire was doubling in forty-nine years. Dupin now states it as doubling in sixty-seven years. Probably the medium of fifty-four or fifty-five years is about the truth.—See TOOKE'S *Russia*, ii. 146; and DUPIN, *Tour Commercial de la France*, i. 36.

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¹ Hassel's
Tables, 1823.
Malte Brun,
vi. 638.

less than 5,250,000 square miles, or above an eighth part of the whole land surface of the globe, and are thinly peopled by 11,000,000 of souls, being only at the rate of *two* inhabitants to the square mile.¹ Setting aside two-thirds of this immense region as sterile and unproductive, there will remain about 1,700,000 square miles capable of being cultivated, and yielding food to man. If these 1,700,000 square miles were peopled as Scotland is, they would support nearly 200,000,000 of inhabitants; if as densely as the whole British isles, above 500,000,000, or about half the whole present inhabitants of the globe. Without supposing that so immense a portion of the earth is to be permanently retained under one dominion, or that Europe is to be ever threatened with subjugation by a second irruption of barbarians from that great *officina gentium*, it is at least worth while to contemplate the vast room here afforded for the future expansion of the species, and interesting to inquire into the power which, even at present, retains the cradles of so many future nations under its sway.²

² Malte Brun,
ii. 387, 388.

8.
Future capabilities of
Siberia.

From the chilly and desert character of more than half its extent, and the melancholy associations connected with the whole, as the scene of European exile and suffering, we are apt to regard Siberia as a region of perpetual night and desolation, incapable of being ever converted into the habitation of happy and industrious man. But though this is doubtless true of a large portion of its surface, yet there are districts of great extent in its southern provinces, watered by large and navigable rivers, which equal the finest parts of Europe in the fertility of their soil, and exceed it in the grandeur and sublimity of their scenery. The stupendous rocks which enclose the spacious waters of the lake of Baikal, the romantic range of the Altai mountains, approaching the Alps in elevation and beauty, are hardly excelled by the most celebrated scenery in Europe. The immense plains which stretch to the eastward, along the banks of the Amour, are capable of containing all the nations of Christendom in comfort and affluence. Traces are not wanting of a much more dense population having formerly inhabited these remote regions than is now to be found in them; but the extreme difficulty of crossing

the boundless steppes by which they are separated from the other abodes of man, and the circumstance of the greater part of their numerous rivers flowing into the Frozen Ocean, have hitherto prevented the human species from spreading in any considerable number into these vast reserves of humanity. It is steam navigation which is destined to effect the transformation. The river Amour, which flows from the mountains of Mongolia into the ocean of Japan, by a course twelve hundred miles in length, of which nine hundred are navigable, in a deep channel, shut in on either side by precipitous rocks, or shaded by noble forests, is the real entrance to eastern Siberia. And though the Chinese are still masters of this splendid stream, it is as indispensable to Asiatic, as the Wolga is to European Russia; ere long it must fall under the dominion of the Czar, and constitute the principal outlet of his immense oriental provinces.¹

Formidable as the power of Russia is, from the boundless extent of its territory, and the great and rapidly increasing number of its subjects, it is still more so from the military spirit and docile disposition by which they are distinguished. The prevailing passion of the nation is the love of conquest; and this ardent desire, which burns as fiercely in them as democratic ambition does in the free states of Western Europe, is the unseen spring which both retains them submissive under the standards of their chief, and impels their accumulated force in ceaseless advance over all the adjoining states. The energies of the people, great as the territory they inhabit, are rarely wasted in internal disputes. Domestic grievances, how great soever, are overlooked in the thirst for foreign aggrandisement. In the conquest of the world the people hope to find a compensation, and more than a compensation, for all the evils of their interior administration. Revolutions of the most violent kind have frequently occurred in the palace, and the order of succession, as in all eastern dynasties, has been often turned aside by the hand of the assassin; but no republican spirit has ever animated any considerable part of the population. The troops who returned from Paris in 1815, brought with them a strong admiration for the institutions of Western Europe; and a large part of the

CHAP.
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¹ Malte Brun,
ii. 489, 490.
Cochrane's
Travels in
Siberia, ii.
236, 260.

9.

Character of
the people,
and their
universal
thirst for con-
quest.

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officers who led the victorious armies of Alexander, were engaged for ten years afterwards in a dark conspiracy, which embittered the last days, and perhaps shortened the life of that great monarch, and certainly convulsed the army and the capital on the accession of his successor. But the nation were strangers to that political movement; the private soldiers who engaged in it were entirely ignorant alike of political rights, and the forms by which they are to be exercised; and the authority of the Czar is still obeyed with undiminished oriental servility in every part of his vast dominions.*

10.
Universal
belief in Rus-
sia that it is
one day to
conquer the
world.

If the belief in the ability of one Englishmen to fight two Frenchmen is generally impressed upon the British peasantry, and has not a little contributed to the many fields of fame, both in ancient and modern times, where this result has really taken place, it is not less true that every Russian is inspired with the conviction, that his country is one day to conquer the world, and that the universal belief of this result is one of the chief causes of the rapid strides which Russia, of late years, has made towards its realisation. The passion for conquest, the thirst for aggrandisement, are among the strongest natural propensities of the human mind. They need neither the schoolmaster nor the press for their diffusion; they are felt even more strongly in the rudest than in the most advanced and civilised ages; and have, in almost every age, impelled the wave of conquest from the regions of poverty over those of opulence. The north is, in an especial manner, the seat of this devouring ambition, and the fountain from whence it floods mankind; for there are to be found at once the hardihood which despises danger, the penury which pants for riches, and the sterility which impels to conquest.† The meanest

* At the time of the conspiracy to put Constantine on the throne, in 1825, which Nicholas only stemmed by extraordinary courage and presence of mind, the cry of the party in the army who supported him was, "Constantine and the Constitution!" Some of the soldiers being asked what was meant by the "Constitution," replied, they knew perfectly well: "It was the *new carriage* in which the Emperor was to drive."

† "Oft on the trembling nations from afar
Hath Scythia poured the living cloud of war;
And where the tempest burst with sweepy sway,
Their arms, their kings, their gods, were roll'd away.
As oft have issued, host impelling host,
The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast:
The prostrate south to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles and her golden fields;

peasant in Russia is impressed with the belief that his country is destined to subdue the world; the rudest nomad of the steppes longs for the period when a second Timour is to open the gates of Derbend, and let loose upon Southern Asia the pent-up forces of its northern wilds. The fearful strife of 1812, the important conquests of 1813 and 1814, have added immensely to this natural disposition; the march through Germany, the capture of Paris, the overthrow of Napoleon, have spread, on grounds which can hardly be denied to be just, the idea of their invincibility; while the tales recounted by the veteran warriors of the deeds of their youth, of the wines of Champagne, the fruits of Lyons, the women of Paris and Italy, have inspired universally that mingled thirst for national elevation and individual enjoyment, which constitute the principal elements in the lust of conquest.

The institutions and government of Russia are calculated in an extraordinary degree to foster in all ranks this ambitious spirit, and turn it in a permanent manner to the purposes of national elevation. Though property is hereditary in its descent, and titles follow the same destination, *rank* is personal only, and depends entirely upon military grade or the sovereign's employment. Thus, a general of the emperor's creation takes precedence of a prince or count by birth; and the highest noble, if he has not a commission in the army, finds himself without either a place or consideration in society. This curious combination of the European principle of the hereditary descent of honours, with the Asiatic maxim that all rank is personal only, and flows from the gift or office under the monarch, leads, however, to hardly any of the embarrassments in practice which might *à priori* be expected. For as the necessity of military office to confer personal rank is every where known, and, from the warlike turn of the people, cordially acquiesced in, it is universally sought after, and no one thinks of aspiring to any place in society who is not either actually, or by the emperor's gift, in the imperial

11.
Rank depends on military employment or the Emperor's gift.

With grim delight the brood of winter view
A brighter day and heaven of azure hue;
Scent the new fragrance of the opening rose,
And quaff the pendant vintage as it grows."

GRAY.

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¹ Bremner's
Russia, i. 210,
212.12.
Military
spirit at the
imperial
palace.

army. The necessity of this real or fictitious military rank creates a multiplication of military honours and designations, which is not a little perplexing to foreigners, and sometimes excites a smile even in the Russians themselves;* but it is admirably calculated to foster a warlike spirit in the people, and by keeping alive the feeling that distinction is to be won only by military honours, to procure for the nation the reality of military success.¹

In consequence of this universality of the military spirit, and all-prevailing sway of military ambition, the whole energies of the nation are, to an extent which appears almost incredible to one of the democratic states of Western Europe, absorbed in the profession of arms. From the emperor's son to the peasant's child, the career of ambition lies in the same channel; the same objects of desire inflame and animate the heart. In the first years of infancy, the mind of the young Cæsarowich is warmed by the recital of the exploits of his father's warriors; the long series of Russian victories is ever present to his mind; his earliest feeling of exultation, his proudest day in life, is when he is first arrayed in the mimic garb of the invincible grenadiers, who have carried the Muscovite standards in triumph to Paris, Erivan, and Adrianople.† He grows up under the in-

* "There is another distinction in Russia, the frequency of which puzzled us not a little—that of *general*. We had heard several people, distinguished neither by warlike looks nor dress, spoken of as generals; some of whom were treated by the young officers with very little deference. One proved to be the *director of a theatre*, who held the office by gift of the Emperor, as many do who have never been in the army. It is lavished in a way which makes it perfectly worthless. We heard of an apothecary who is a general, and the Empress's accoucheur may be lieutenant-colonel. A penniless lieutenant, with his epaulettes on his shoulders, will get horses instantly in travelling, when a merchant who has thousands must wait for hours, so universal is the respect paid to military rank."—BREMNER'S *Russia*, i. 210, 211. These are trifles; but they are straws which show how the wind sets; and Europe will find it a pretty stiff north-east wind which has set in from the plains of Muscovy.

† "In the interior of the *salle blanche* of the imperial palace at St Petersburg, on each side of the door, were placed two of the finest grenadiers of the regiment, measuring at least six feet two or three inches. When we had passed these in the outer hall, to our amazement we beheld the two little grand-dukes standing as sentinels, and dressed with minute exactness as privates of the regiment, with their knapsacks, greatcoats, and haversacks, all in marching order. To the inexpressible amusement of every body, the Emperor himself then put the little princes through the manual and platoon exercises, which they both did incomparably. The universal delight, from the oldest general to the lowest subaltern of the guards, was something I cannot describe."—LONDONDERRY'S *Tour to Russia*, i. 248. The author has the satisfaction of giving an entire confirmation to this statement, if any were wanting, from the evidence of his highly respected friend, General Tcheffkine, aide-de-camp to the Emperor Nicolas, and chief of the mining engineers of Russia, who has frequently seen the little grand-dukes on mimic duty on these interesting occasions.

fluence of the same feelings ; the troops salute him, not with the title of emperor, but of "father ;" and his familiar and uniform appellation to them is, not soldiers, but "children." * The empire, in the opinion of the Muscovite peasant, is a vast family, of which the Czar is the head ; the chief interest of all its members is to enlarge the possessions and extend the glory of the domestic circle ; and their first duty, to obey the imperial commands, and sacrifice themselves or their children, when required, to the imperial will.¹

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i Lond. i.
198, 208.
Brem. i. 360,
361.

When such is the tone of mind which pervades the palace and the peasantry, it may readily be believed, that the spirit of all the intermediate classes, and, in effect, of the whole empire, is essentially military, and that their energies are almost exclusively devoted to warlike pursuits. In truth, this object entirely occupies their thoughts, and every thing else is comparatively neglected. Commerce, though flourishing,† is held in little estimation, and is for the most part engrossed by the merchants of the English factory. Agriculture, though not less than in the American states the main source of the national strength, is left to the boors, who prosecute it as their fathers did before them ; and, in consequence, make little advance in improved methods of cultivation. Judicial and other civil employments, save diplomacy, are held in utter contempt;‡ the whole youth of the empire who

13.
Its general
adoption
through the
Empire.

* "The troops do not salute, but, as every division passes, the emperor hails them with the accustomed cheer of 'How are you, *my children?*' To which they reply, in enthusiastic roar, 'We thank you, *father.*' The corps having defiled, the emperor again touches his hat to all the officers, saying, 'Adieu, messieurs ;' and then, walking from the regiment, he exclaims, 'I am satisfied with your zeal and conduct, my children.' 'We'll do better next time,' is then the cry from the battalions; and, in the midst of this shout, his imperial majesty, accompanied by the little Caesarowitch, mounts his open phaeton, and drives off."—LONDONDERRY'S *Travels in Russia*, i. 224. The first time that the author heard these striking expressions used by the Czar and his troops was at Paris in May 1814, when Alexander reviewed his Guards on the road from the barrier of Neuilly to St Cloud. He will never forget the impression which these words, repeated by thirty thousand voices, in accents of rapturous enthusiasm, produced on his mind.

	1835.	1836.
† Exports of Russia, . . .	107,033,563	129,601,862 rubles.
Imports, . . .	165,686,702	180,913,929 do.

—LOND. ii. 145.

‡ "Nothing astonishes the Russian or Polish noblemen so much as seeing the estimation in which the civil professions, and especially the bar, are held in Great Britain. The judicial profession, and the whole class of legal practitioners, are every where despised and wretchedly paid ; and, as a natural consequence, the taking of bribes is all but universal."—BRENNER, i. 344, 350.—A young Polish nobleman once energetically expressed to the author how much

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aspire to any station in society, are bred for the army. One hundred and eighty thousand young men, the flower of the population, comprising ten thousand officers, among whom are found almost all its talent and energy, are constantly at the public seminaries,* where military education is taught in the very best manner, and the whole knowledge communicated is of a kind to be available in warlike pursuits. Europe has much need to consider well how the pressure of sixty millions of men, doubling every half-century, directed by the whole talent of the nation, educated at such seminaries, is to be averted. And those who believe that a pacific era is arising—that commercial interests are to rule the world, and one great deluge of democracy to overwhelm all other institutions, would do well to contemplate the spirit and institutions of this state, which now possesses a fourteenth of the inhabitants and an eighth part of the whole surface of the globe.¹

¹ Krusen-
stern's
Instruction
Publique en
Russie, War-
saw, 1837.
Lond. ii. 156,
159. Mar-
mont, Voy-
ages.

14.

Universality
of decorations
to all persons
in civil and
military em-
ployment.

As a natural consequence of this warlike spirit, and of the military institutions in the empire, military honours, badges, and other insignia, are universal, and distributed, both to civil and military servants, with a profusion which to an Englishman appears injudicious, and materially lessens their real value as a badge of merit. In the midst of these numerous decorations, however, there is one which none can wear but those who have really earned it, which cannot by its nature be prostituted to unworthy objects, and of which the Emperor is more proud than of the English order of the Garter—the medal given to all the soldiers who had served in the campaign of 1812. With this exception, however, and notwithstanding the numerous attempts to create distinctions by classes in the orders, they appear, at least to an English eye, exceedingly common; and Metternich expressed this feeling with his usual felicity,² when, on seeing at a Russian party the

² Slade,
Russia in
1838, 174.

he had been “*effrayé*” when he heard that Sir Walter Scott was an *avocat*; and if these pages should fall under the eye of any similar military youth, he will probably be not less horrified at finding the author has been bred to the profession of Cicero and Demosthenes.

* Military pupils at military schools under the Grand-duke Michael,	1836. 8,733
Pupils at Navy-board schools,	2,224
Pupils at schools under Minister at War,	169,024

179,981

English ambassador enter the room in a plain blue coat, amidst the galaxy of stars with which he was surrounded, he exclaimed—"Ma foi ! il est bien distingué !"

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The military strength of the empire is proportioned to its vast physical resources, and the strong warlike disposition which distinguishes its inhabitants. It consists at present, (1840,) according to the authority of Marshal Marmont and the Marquis of Londonderry, who had access to the best sources of information, of six corps, or separate armies of the line, comprising seventy-two regiments of infantry, twenty-four of light cavalry, ninety batteries of foot, and twelve of horse-artillery. Each regiment of infantry contains seven battalions of a thousand men each ; of which six are always on active service, and the seventh at the depot in the interior ; so that the infantry of the line musters, at least on paper, above five hundred thousand men. In addition to this, there are twelve regiments of infantry and twelve of cavalry, twelve batteries of foot and four of horse-artillery, in the Guards ; twelve regiments of grenadiers on foot, four on horseback, and seventeen grenadier batteries. There are also twenty-four regiments of heavy reserve cavalry, and twelve batteries of reserve horse-artillery ; and the corps of the Caucasus, of Orenburg, of Siberia, Finland, and the interior, which number among them no less than a hundred battalions of a thousand men each, forty regiments of horse, and thirty-six batteries of artillery. Besides these forces, the emperor has at his disposal one hundred and forty-six regiments of Cossacks, each eight hundred strong, of which fifty-six come from the steppes of the Don, and are superior to any troops in the world for the service of light cavalry. If these immense bodies of men were complete, they would number above eight hundred and fifty thousand infantry, and two hundred and fifty thousand horse. But the ranks are far from being filled up : innumerable officers in every grade have an interest in representing the effective force as greater than it really is, as they draw pay and rations for the whole, and appropriate the allowances of the men of straw to themselves ; and in no service in the world is the difference so considerable between the muster-rolls of an army on paper, and the real number of sabres and bayonets it can bring

15.
Military
force of
Russia.

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LXXI.

1812.

¹ Marmont,
Voyages, i.
184, 189.
Malte Brun,
vi. 635.

into the field. Still, after making every allowance for these well-known deficiencies, it is not going too far to assert, that Russia, without weakening her establishments in the fortresses and the interior, can produce four hundred thousand infantry, one hundred thousand horse, and fifty thousand artillerymen, for offensive operations beyond her frontier, though it would require more than a year to bring even the half of this immense force to bear on any one point in Europe or Asia.¹

16.
Revenues of
the empire,
and small cost
of the army.

The total revenues of the empire at this moment do not exceed £14,000,000, (one hundred and forty millions of florins,) and are derived from a capitation-tax, to which every individual in the empire alike, whether serf or free, is subjected; a tax on the capital of merchants; the crown domains, which yield a large part of the public income, and proceed from the *obrok*, or personal duty paid by the peasants of the crown, and the rent of the lands which they cultivate; the customhouse duties; the tax on the sale of heritable property, which is rated at five per cent; the duty on spirits; the salt monopoly; and the produce of the imperial mines. It may appear surprising how forces so immense can be maintained by revenues so inconsiderable; but the marvel ceases when the extremely small sums which suffice for the pay of the troops are taken into consideration. Dr Johnson's celebrated saying, "that eggs are a penny the dozen in the Highlands, not because eggs are many, but because pence are few," was never more strongly exemplified. The cost of a foot-soldier for a year in Russia is little more than a third of what it is in France, and a fifth of his cost in Great Britain; in the cavalry and artillery the difference is still more striking.* The nominal pay of the soldier—nearly a ruble (or about 1s.) a-day—is not inconsiderable;

	Francs.	L. s.
* Cost of a foot-soldier for a year in Russia,	120 or	4 16
.. .. in Austria,	212 or	8 9
.. .. in Prussia,	240 or	9 12
.. .. in France,	340 or	13 12
.. .. in England,	538 or	21 0

The magnitude of this disproportion is not to be explained alone by the difference in the value of money in each of these states when applied to the purchase of the necessaries of life; for between some of them, especially France and Great Britain, this difference is inconsiderable. Much more is owing to the difference in the habits of enjoyment and good living in the working classes in the European states; and in this respect the British soldier, as well as citizen, stands far ahead of all the rest.—See MARMONT, *Voyages*, i. 189, 190.

but so much of it is intercepted by rations and other deductions, some of which go to enrich his officers, that he has not *half a farthing per diem* to spend on his own comforts—a pittance, small as it is, which is nearly double what is enjoyed in the sea service. The Cossacks receive 8s. 6d. of clear pay annually, out of which they are obliged to furnish themselves with starched neckcloths. As some compensation, however, for the limited amount of his pay, every Russian soldier becomes free on entering the army; and he is entitled to his discharge after twenty years' service, on which occasion he receives four or five hundred rubles (£16 or £20) to stock a farm assigned to him on the crown domains.¹

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LXXI.
1808.

¹ Marmont,
Voyages, i.
189, 190.
Bremner, i.
368, 371.

Predial slavery, as all the world knows, is general in Russia, excepting in the crown domains, and the territories of the Cossacks and Malo-Russians in the south, where personal freedom has been long established. This sullen line of demarcation, however, is much less strongly marked there than in many other countries, from the custom which prevails of the master allowing the serfs who have a turn for commerce or the arts, to engage in such lucrative employments, and realise their gains for themselves, upon paying him a certain *obrok*, or capitation tax, annually—a practice which almost lets in to the industrious slave the blessings of freedom. Even to those who remain at their pristine occupations of the axe and the plough, the bond which attaches them to the soil, though often felt as galling at one period of life, proves a blessing at another. The labourers on an estate constitute, as they formerly did in the West Indies, the chief part of its value; and thus the proprietor is induced to take care of his slaves by the same motives which prompt him to do so with his buildings or cattle.²

17.
Slavery of the
peasantry.

² Cox's
Travels, lii.
183. Clarke,
i. 176.
Tooke's
Russia, b. iv.
c. 1.

Relief in sickness, care of orphans, maintenance of the maimed, or in old age, are important advantages to the labouring classes even in the most favourable circumstances, and with all the facilities for rendering themselves independent, which the habits of civilised life, and the power of accumulating and preserving capital arising from the interchange of commerce, afford. But in rude periods, when these advantages are unknown, and the means of providing during the vigour, for the weakness, of

18.
Its advantages in the
state of
society there
existing.

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life, do not exist, they are of inestimable value. The long want of such maintenance and care for the poor is the true secret of the misery of Ireland; it would be a real blessing to its inhabitants, in lieu of the destitution of freedom, to obtain the protection of slavery.* Stripes, insults, and compulsory labour are no light evils; but they are as nothing compared to the wasting agonies of famine, the violence of ill-directed and ungovernable passions, which never fail to seize upon prematurely emancipated man. The servitude and forced industry of the serf fill up the interval, the long and important interval, between the roving independence of the savage, who lives by the chase or the milk of his herds, and the voluntary toil of the freeman, around whom artificial wants have thrown the unseen but riveting chains of civilised life. But for its existence, this wide chasm could never have been passed; for man will never labour voluntarily till he has acquired the habits and desires of an advanced stage in society; and those habits, when generally pervading the community, can exist only from the effect of previous centuries of compulsory labour.¹

The army is kept up by a compulsory levy of so many per hundred or thousand, levied by government under the authority of an imperial ukase. In general, five in a thousand is the annual quota which is required; but on pressing occasions, two or three per hundred are demanded; and on occasion of the French advance to Moscow, ten in the latter number were voluntarily voted by the Russian nobles. Each proprietor is obliged, in addition to the man, to furnish his outfit to government, amounting to thirty-three rubles (£1, 5s. 10d.). The day of drawing the men on the several estates is one of universal mourn-

¹ Clarke's Travels, i. 90, and 170. Cox's Travels, iii. 183. Heber in Clarke, i. 170. Tooke's Russia, b. iv. c. 1.

19.
Mode of
levying the
troops.

* "I have no hesitation in saying, that the condition of the peasantry in Russia is far superior to the same class in Ireland. Provisions are plentiful, good, and cheap; good comfortable log-houses are to be seen in every village; immense droves of cattle are scattered over unlimited pastures; and whole forests of fuel may be had for a trifle. With ordinary care and economy the Russian peasant may become rich, especially in those villages situated between the two capitals. In Siberia, scarcely any full-grown man is to be found among the convicts who has not two or three horses, and as many cattle; and they yield him, from the price paid for their labour at the government prices, a sum adequate to the purchase of a pound and a half of meat and three of bread daily, in addition to the produce of the land allotted to the convicts."—COCHRANE'S *Travels in Russia and Siberia*, i. 79 and 190. It would be a happy day for the Irish peasantry, the slaves of their own heedless and savage passions, could they exchange places with the Siberian convicts, subjected to the less grievous yoke of punishment and despotism.

ing and lamentation. The conscript leaves his paternal home with scarce a hope of ever seeing it again: his mother and sisters make the air resound with their shrieks; chains are often necessary to secure his appearance at the appointed place of muster; and his companions accompany him in tears for miles on the road to his destination. In this, however, as in other cases, where a separation from old habits is induced by irresistible necessity, the human mind ere long bends to the force of circumstances. With his military dress and the first use of arms, the young soldier puts off the recollection of former days; a new career of ambition, fresh rewards, hitherto unknown desires, stimulate his mind; he feels the dignity of a freeman, the elevation of a superior profession, and not unfrequently the most painful moment in life is afterwards found to have been the nativity of a more elevated state of existence. In one instance only, the natural feelings of grief at the separation of the young conscript from all that are dear to him, were overcome by a still holier feeling. When the regiments were raised in pursuance of the great levy which followed the French advance to Moscow, tears were shed in abundance when those on whom the lot had fallen took their departure: but they were tears of joy and exultation upon the part of their relatives, not of sorrow; and the only houses in which real grief was felt, were those whose sons were not called on to join their comrades in the sacred duty of defending their country.¹

¹ Bremner,
370. Segur,
ii. 90. Bout.
ii. 117, 118.

Vast as are the military resources which this system of regular conscription, in a country so immense, and containing a population so rapidly increasing, places at the disposal of the Russian emperor, they form by no means the whole of those on which he has to rely. Whole nations of soldiers are contained in the Muscovite dominions, and are ever ready to start into activity at a signal from the Czar. The MILITARY COLONIES constitute an important and rapidly increasing part of the imperial possessions, and furnish no small addition to the warlike strength of the empire. They owe their origin to the Emperor Alexander, who, being struck with the advantages which similar establishments on the frontiers of Transylvania had long afforded to the Austrians in warding off the incur-

20.
Military
colonies.

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sions of the Mussulman horse, resolved in 1817 to establish them on a great scale in different parts of his dominions.* The same system was extended and enlarged under the guidance of the able General De Witt, in the southern provinces, in 1821. Several divisions of cavalry were colonised in this manner ; and a floating population of seventy thousand wandering tribes was located on the districts allotted to them, to furnish recruits for the troops. The holders of these lands, which they receive from the crown, are bound, as the only payment they make for them, to lodge and maintain a soldier ; and to labour for forty-four days in the year for the public works in progress in the country. There are already in the military colonies twelve thousand men, constantly ready and equipped, as a depot for the twenty regiments which are distributed in this manner ; and the warlike spirit of the youth from whom the recruits are furnished, is perpetually kept alive by the recital of glories, perils, and plunder which they hear from the veterans who are settled on the lands. The military spirit thus comes to animate the entire population : the *esprit de corps* is felt not by regiments alone, but by the whole flourishing colony by whom they are surrounded. As the experiment has met with entire success, and there is no limit to the extent of waste land which may be appropriated in the Muscovite dominions to these purposes, it is difficult to see any bounds to the addition which may thus be made to the power of the Czar, by a system which superadds to the military tenure of the feudal ages the regular organisation and powerful control of modern government.¹

¹ Marmont, Voyages, i. 193, 215.

21.
The Cossacks. Their territory, character and manners.

The COSSACKS are another race of colonised warriors, who all hold their lands by military tenure, and are bound, when occasion requires, to furnish the whole male population capable of bearing arms for the service of the state. Those of the Don inhabit a territory of immense extent : it spreads over no less than 57,600 square geographical miles in extent—a surface nearly two-thirds of that of the whole British islands, and incomparably more level and fertile. Some part of it is as fruitful as the Ukraine, and it is all destitute of hills. But a con-

* See for the Austrian frontier military colonies, MARMONT'S *Voyages*, i. 226, 228 ; WALSH'S *Constantinople*, 287 ; and CLARKE'S *Travels*.

siderable portion, though covered with a velvet carpet of turf, is probably destined to remain for ever, from the want of rivers or brooks, inhabited only by nomad herdsmen. Unlike the peasants of the greater part of Russia, the people of this district are entirely relieved from the fetters of servitude. "Free as a Cossack" is a common proverb through all the south of the Muscovite dominions. Their political privileges, even in the midst of the Russian empire, approach to those of democratic equality; and the active roving habits of the race are strongly exemplified even in those circumstances where they are fixed in one situation, and permanently engaged in the labours of agriculture. Though their industry there is very conspicuous, the villages clean and thriving, the houses white and comfortable, and the produce of their fisheries on the Don very considerable;* yet the dispositions of the people are still those of their Scythian forefathers. Horses comprise their chief, often their only, luxury; equestrian races or games their great delight; five hundred or a thousand stallions constitute the studs of the great, three or four are possessed by the poor; boundless pastures furnish to all the means of ample subsistence: and all are alike ready, at the call of their beloved hetman, to follow his fortunes to the scenes of European plunder or glory.¹

Under a pure and cloudless heaven are spread out the boundless steppes of the Ukraine, of which it was long ago said that "the sky is ever serene, and storms and hurricanes are unknown." One who has been accustomed to the gloomy forests, dark clouds, sterile lands and marshes, of the north of Russia, can hardly figure to himself the boundless fields waving with corn, the valleys strewed with the fresh down of blooming vegetation, the meadows whose luxuriant covering conceals from the eye the waters of the streams. Still less can the habitations of the people in Great Russia convey an idea of the cottages in the Ukraine, built of carved trees covered with white-washed clay, with smooth polished earthen floors. The dirty peasant of Great Russia, with

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¹ Malte
Brun, vi.
402. Brem-
ner, ii. 428,
446.

22.
Description
of the
Ukraine, and
the character
of its inhabi-
tants.

* The export of fish and caviare from the country of the Don Cossacks is no less than 500,000 rubles, or about £25,000 annually: a sum equivalent to at least £100,000 a-year in this country.—MALTE BRUN, vi. 402.

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812.

his long tangled hair, bespeaks the Tartar rule; while the villager of the north, with his clear blue eyes and light brown hair, attests the Slavonian blood. But in the Ukraine, the serious reflecting countenance of the man, his tall figure, half-shaven head, long mustaches, and abrupt speech, discover the mingled descent of the ancient Russian and savage Asiatic. His dress bears marks of the Lithuanian and Polish rule of four centuries. He is slow, taciturn, and of few words; but shrewd, intelligent, and rigorous in the observance of promises, both given and received. While the one lives entirely in the present, the other dwells chiefly on the past. Remind the Cossack of his former glories, his recent historical achievements, and you have found the passport to his heart: his countenance will brighten, his eye kindle; you will hear the song of the steppe, and be astonished at the cheerfulness of his disposition.¹

¹ Polewoy,
Hist. of
Russia, ii.
317.

23.
Incredible
devastation
of the Tartar
tribes in
Southern
Russia in
former times.

The origin of this singular people accounts in a considerable degree for their peculiar character. Nature and man have stamped an impress upon their minds which can never be effaced. Placed on the frontiers of Europe and Asia, they have always dwelt in the plains which, from the earliest ages, have been the highway by which Scythian violence passed on to civilised plunder. Amidst tombs which, rising on either hand, far through the boundless wastes, marked the blood-stained passage of the multitudinous nations whose names, as Chateaubriand has said, "are known only to God;" amidst walls raised by unknown hands, and cemeteries whitening with the bones of Russians, Hungarians, Lithuanians, and Poles, the Tartars still discerned the tracks which led from their far-distant steppes to the seat of civilised man. Flights of rapacious birds announced their approach, and the mournful omen was confirmed by the glowing sky that reddened as their torches consumed the villages. The barbarian hordes, in their sudden attacks, overpowered the inhabitants, and seized the fruits of their toil before the warlike proprietors could assemble from their castles for their defence. Prompt in aggression, prompter still in flight, they dragged into captivity the youth of both sexes, driving off the herds, and leaving behind them only the silence of ashes and the corpses of the slain.²

² Gnorowski,
Insurrection
of Poland in
1830-31, i.
47, 48.

Notwithstanding this ceaseless havoc, the population still sprang up afresh upon that beautiful soil; cut up, as it was, says a Slavonian poet, "by the tramp of horses, fertilised by human blood, and white with bones—where sorrow grew abundantly."

It was amidst the misery and from the effects of this constant devastation, which continued for several centuries, that the Cossack nation took its rise. Two corners of land, overlooked in the great streams of conquest to the south-west, remained as places of refuge for the fugitives—one beyond the Don, towards the Sea of Azoff, and the other beyond the islands of the Dnieper, towards the Black Sea. They formed the cradle of this singular people, as the Lagunæ of the Po were, from a similar cause and at the same period, of the Venetian Republic. About sixty miles below Kiow, the Dnieper forms a variety of islands, upwards of seventy in number. The banks of the river, here fringed with wood, there steep or marshy—the deep caverns in the rocky islands, concealed by spreading trees or tangled thorn-bushes, offered a favourable place of refuge, when the open country was overrun by the barbarians. At the epoch of the first general invasion of the Tartars, and again during the Lithuanian wars, many persons found shelter here; and their number was subsequently increased by the arrival of adventurers, guided by necessity or the love of change; by deserters from the Lithuanian, Polish, Hungarian, and Wallachian ranks; by fugitives from Tartar bondage; or by serfs escaping from the oppression of their lords. The motley crew was at first held together, and prevented from overstepping its limits, by a rule enforcing, during the common calamity, celibacy, fishing, and hard labour. Gradually, as the danger rolled away, these restrictions were forgotten, and they ventured upon secret excursions to the neighbouring plains, which, by degrees, extended down the Dnieper, and along the shores of the Black Sea, to the very walls of Constantinople. In more peaceable times, they spread over the adjoining plains, fed vast flocks on the steppes, and cultivated the earth; and then, in huts built of clay, they led a rude life, mindful only of the subsistence of the moment. But they retained the character imprinted

24.
Origin of the
Cossacks in
these disasters.

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¹ Gnorowski's
Poland, i. 73.

25.
Their inveterate nomad habits.

² Gnorowski,
Poland, i. 74,
75.

26.
Influence of
the victories
in Germany
and France
on the Cossacks.

on them by their origin, their necessities, and their situation. Fishing in the Don and the Dnieper ever remained, and still continues, a favourite occupation of the people, and a principal source of their wealth; the necessity of flight to existence was constantly felt; and the nation, true to its origin, still looked for its riches in prosperity, its refuge in adversity, to the swiftness of its steeds. "Let the flame of invasion," said they, "consume our huts: in a week we will plant new hedges, fill up our ditches with earth, cover our thorns with reeds—soon others shall arise. Sooner shall the foe be wearied with destruction than we with restoration."¹

Independence, amidst a world of serfs, gave charms to this precarious existence; freedom sweetened the toils and lightened the dangers of these unfettered rovers. Their own industry, the spoils of others, brought them plenty: mounted on swift chargers, free as the wind of the steppes, they enjoyed their liberty; and generations grew up amidst the clashing of swords and the song of battle. Singing the airs of his native wilds, the Cossack of former days left his home on an expedition to Azoff, Sinope, or Constantinople; a beautiful captive often became his wife, the richest stuffs his attire, his enemies' best weapons his arms. He returned home with his trophies, distributed his spoils, and took no care for the morrow: but the trophies of his prowess were religiously preserved; his children played with his sword, or arrayed themselves in the panoply of his enemies. These habits still continue, though the objects and scene of his warfare are changed; and the Cossack youth point to the cuirasses of the French horsemen, or the standards of the Imperial Guard, preserved in their churches; and honour these prizes of recent valour, as their ancestors did the trophies of Trebizond or the spoils of Constantinople.²

Nearly the whole Cossacks of the Don capable of bearing arms, attended the standard of Platoff to the neighbourhood of Moscow, and by their indefatigable activity as light horse, mainly contributed to the astonishing results of the campaign. Nothing now arrests so certainly the volatile youth of the plains of the Don as the recital, by the old warriors, of their exploits on the fields of Germany and France, their tales of the

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marvels of Paris, of the wines and the women of the south. The shining armour of the cuirassiers of the Imperial Guard, the trophies of the hard-fought field of Eylau;* the eagles and standards which were won amidst the cannonade of Leipsie, hang, the objects of universal veneration, in the church of Tcherkask, the principal town of their country. And though their institutions are so free as almost to rival the ruinous democratic constitution of Poland, the turbulence of pastoral republicanism is gradually yielding to the seductions and the address of the imperial court, and on all important occasions it is effectually drowned in the indelible passion for warfare and plunder.¹

Above a hundred thousand Cossacks, distributed in one hundred and sixty-four regiments, are now to be found in the Muscovite armies; their physical force, and the vast influence which they exerted in the later years of the war, render them an object of serious importance and interest to all the European states. The word "Cossack" means a volunteer, or free partisan;² their whole service is voluntary; one of their most highly valued privileges is, that they cannot be chained, when enrolled and on the march to the military stations, as the other conscripts of Russia are, when they prove refractory. They hold their lands by military tenure; and, by the terms of it, every individual is obliged to serve four years in the Russian armies, and this they do in time of peace for a merely nominal pay. This service is to them rather an amusement and delight than a duty. Trained from early childhood to the use of the lance and sword; familiarised to the management of the small but active horse, which can undergo almost any fatigue, and seldom falls even in the roughest country, the young Cossack joyfully mounts the playfellow and companion of his infancy, and wends his way, exulting, to the unknown but oft-imagined scenes of distant plunder. At home he is kind, gentle, and domestic in his habits; but when called to foreign warfare, he assumes at once the ferocious habits of his Scythian ancestors. Pillage is their principal object, and the whole produce of their marauding which will admit of being carried, is stowed away between the saddle and the

¹ Malte Brun, vi. 402, 403. Bremner, ii. 425, 436. Clarke's Travels, i. 283, 296.

27.
Their numbers, appearance, and manners.

² Karamsin, vi. 476.

³ Personal Observation. Scott's Napoleon, v. 363. Bremner, ii. 432, 440.

* *Ante*, Chap. xliv. § 67.

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girths; so that, after a long campaign, they sit fully a foot above the backs of their horses. They seldom, in former wars, gave quarter; but in the campaign of 1812, and the subsequent years, Alexander promised them a ducat for every French prisoner they brought in, which soon produced a plentiful harvest of captives.

28.
Their mode
of fighting,
and habits in
war.

Like other Asiatic horsemen, to whom they belong by descent, if not by birth, the Cossacks do not attack in a close body like the European cavaliers, but in a *swarm*, or loose charge, where each man selects his individual antagonist; and, with a loud *hourra*, they bear furiously down upon their opponents. In the course of the war in Germany, however, in 1813, they came to act in a more regular and systematic manner; and both then, and in the campaign in the following spring in France, frequently and successfully charged squares, and performed all the duties of regular cavalry. But it is chiefly in the service of light troops that the Cossacks are seen to advantage, and then their services are invaluable. Never had an army such eyes as they furnished; none ever possessed a host capable of drawing such a screen before the observation of the enemy. Mounted on their hardy little horses, they have frequently been known to travel a hundred miles in twenty-four hours, loaded with arms and plunder; and, in their heaviest marching order, they plunge into rivers, thread morasses, explore thickets, and cross the most fearful deserts, whether parched by the heats of summer or charged with the snows of winter. No army with the Cossacks in its front need fear a surprise; none with them heading the pursuit can be secure against it. Their velocity, activity, and courage, render them peculiarly dangerous to a retreating, often fatal to a flying enemy. When the rearguard halts, and a respectable force collects to oppose their incursions, they never hazard an attack, but fly without hesitation, like the Parthians of old, till a more favourable opportunity of renewing the pursuit occurs; and when the enemy again retires, they press upon his retreating columns, inundate the country on all sides of his line of march, and are frequently to be seen a hundred miles in advance of the pursuing force.¹

Personal
Observation.
Scott's Napo-
leon, v. 364.
Sir R. Wil-
son's Camp.
of 1807, 27,
28. Brem. ii.
437, 446.

The naval power of Russia, though far from being incon-

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29.
Naval force
of Russia.1 Brem.
375, 376.36.
General dis-
inclination of
the nation to
the navy.

siderable, and now an object of well-founded and serious alarm to Great Britain, is not the direction which the national spirit naturally takes, nor that from which durable danger to other states is probably to be apprehended. At present, the Emperor Nicholas has thirty ships of the line and twenty-two powerful frigates at Cronstadt; besides sixteen of the line and twelve frigates in the Black Sea. It has been maintained nearly at that level for the last thirty years; and what renders it peculiarly formidable to England is, that this large force is not distracted by the defence of any colonies or distant possessions; that it is kept constantly on the war establishment, and with stores and provisions on board ready for immediate operations; that the Baltic fleet in summer manœuvres for some months with thirty thousand men on board; that, though extremely deficient in nautical skill, the Russians are admirably trained to the practice of gunnery, and stand with devoted resolution to their pieces alike in naval as military war; and that, under protection of the bastions of Cronstadt, and the castles of the Dardanelles, they possess alike in the north and the south impregnable places of refuge.^{1*}

Still, though the danger to England is doubtless great while such a force lies within a fortnight's sail of London, with hardly any fleet at the disposal of the British government to protect the English shores,† it is evident that it is not from the naval power of Russia that the liberties of Europe are permanently to be endangered. The spirit of the nation is essentially military: territorial conquest, not commercial extension or distant colonisation, is her destined path. The despotic nature of the government, the closing of the Baltic by ice during half the year, and of the Euxine by the gates of the Dardanelles during the whole, are alike inconsistent with naval greatness. If England were animated with her ancient national spirit, and her government were of sufficient strength to direct a part of her vast maritime resources into the

* "Lay yourself alongside a Frenchman; but outmanœuvre a Russian."—NELSON.

† "It is a mistake to say that Great Britain is utterly unprotected. She has three ships of the line, and three guard-ships afloat, to protect the shores of England."—Speech of Sir CHARLES ADAM, Lord of the Admiralty, House of Commons, March 8, 1839. *Parl. Debates*.

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¹ Demost.
Phil. 2d.
Bremner's
Russia, i.
375, 376.

public service, she might behold with contempt the play-thing of the Czar performing its mimic evolutions on the Baltic. In the words of Demosthenes to the Athenian people, to whose situation in regard to Philip that of Britain to Russia in these times bears a striking, even a fearful resemblance—"It is your weakness which is his strength; and he owes his present increase of power infinitely more to your indolence than to his own exertions."¹

31.
Want of coal
in the empire,
and its im-
portant
effects.

There is one remarkable peculiarity of the Russian empire, which, to the people of the British isles, is a subject of peculiar interest and importance. Rich as her territories are in agricultural productions, there is one mineral, without which she can never attain to manufacturing greatness, which is almost altogether wanting. Coal is scarcely to be found to the west of the Ural mountains; at least, where it is discovered, it exists in such inconsiderable strata as to be not worth working. The lid of the box in which this valuable mineral is found in the British islands is there; the bottom, of red sandstone, is there also; but the intermediate seams of coal and ironstone are very rarely found.* The latter occurs indeed in some places, and at Toula extensive ironworks exist for the internal supply of the empire; but without coal she can never compete, in the supply of great manufactories, with countries where fuel is supplied from the spontaneous bounty of nature in the mineral regions of the earth. Thus the destinies of England and Russia are as clearly traced out by the hand of nature, in the physical peculiarities of the two countries, as they are in the moral character and disposition of their respective inhabitants.

32.
Different
destinies of
Great Britain
and Russia
from this
cause.

They are obviously intended for greatness in different lines; they are calculated to grow with each other's growth, and strengthen with their strength. The world is large enough for both; and each will discharge its duty, and perform its mission best, by avoiding interference with the path of the other. Destitute of coal, and scantily supplied with ironstone—with its principal harbours

* This important fact I had from my highly valued friend Sir Roderick Murchison, President of the Geological Society of London, whose recent travels in Russia have elicited so much valuable information in regard to the mineral riches of that empire.

blocked up half the year by ice, and the greater part of its population far removed from the ocean in the midst of vast agricultural or pastoral plains—the people of Russia are as manifestly disqualified from attaining commercial or manufacturing greatness, as they are calculated by their vast numbers, enduring valour, and submissive obedience to their chiefs, to attain the summit of military power. Abounding with coal, richly endowed with ironstone, encircled by the storms of the German and the Atlantic ocean, placed midway between European civilisation and American increase, Great Britain is as clearly marked out by nature to be the workshop of the world, as she is evidently fitted, by the industrious habits, active character, and independent spirit of her inhabitants, to perform the great work of maritime colonisation throughout the globe.

Justice is venal throughout the whole Muscovite, as in all oriental dominions. The judges are numerous, and abundant means of appeal, ostensibly calculated to check injustice, are provided. But the one thing needful is generally wanting—a conscientious spirit, strict discharge of duty on the bench, and public respect for their functions. This is the natural consequence of the military spirit of the people, and the almost exclusive direction of the national resources to warlike preparations. The salaries of the judges of all grades are so miserably small, that they are driven almost by necessity to eke them out by presents from the suitors; and so low does the judicial office stand in common estimation, that this is considered at once natural and unavoidable in such functionaries. Nothing surprises the Russians so much as to find that it does not equally stain the English ermine. An equal and impartial administration of justice is the appropriate and peculiar blessing of a free government; it can neither exist in a despotic monarchy nor a democratic republic; for, in the first case, there is nothing to counterbalance the frowns of the sovereign—in the second, to withstand the passions of the people.¹

33.
Venality of
justice in the
Russian
dominions.

¹ Bremner, i.
272, 284.
Malte Brun,
vi. 378.

But, for the same reason, the Russian monarchy is, in the general case, greatly superior to the British in external negotiation; and the diplomacy of the cabinet of St James's or the Tuileries has seldom proved a match

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34.

Great ability
of the Rus-
sians in diplo-
macy.

for that of St Petersburg. This is the obvious result alike of the independence of the government of popular control, the strong ambitious spirit by which the nation is animated, and the concentration of nearly the whole of its civil talent in this one department. No seats in parliament are there to be won, no votes in the peers secured, by promoting titled frivolity or influential imbecility over the head of unconnected talent or diplomatic address. The cabinet feels that territorial aggrandisement is the principal bulwark of the throne, and that a reign which steps from acquisition to acquisition is never likely to feel the want of popularity. The nobles, aware of the absolute necessity of abilities to secure these advantages, overlook the elevation of merit, even from the humblest ranks, to situations where they may thus advance the national fortunes. It is the constant practice of the imperial ministers to promote young men of distinguished talent from the military or ecclesiastical schools into the civil offices; and as almost the whole youth of the empire who receive any education are to be found at one or other of these seminaries, and their number exceeds two hundred thousand, it is not surprising that a vast mass of talent is thus brought to bear upon the destinies of the state. The example of Maria Theresa, whose discerning eye discovered a future Thugut in the clever answers of a boy of fourteen in a public hospital at Vienna, has found many imitators in the Muscovite rulers; and in the search of talent they are limited to no localities, and willingly draw diplomatic ability from foreign states, or even from the ranks of their enemies.

35.

Cause of their
superiority in
this respect to
England.

It is the comparatively unrestricted power of doing this which constitutes one great source of the strength of absolute monarchies: it is the necessity of sacrificing talent to influence, in ordinary times, in almost every department of the state, which is the chief cause of the acknowledged inferiority of the public servants, whether civil or military, in constitutional monarchies. But, for the same reason, the rulers of a free government, when public danger or the necessities of the times have compelled them to overlook the ordinary sources of influence, and seek for talent wherever it is to be found, have an

incomparably wider field to search, and, in general, will in the end bring a greater and more wide-spread mass of talent to sustain the national fortunes. In the first case, the foresight and energy of government supply the want of vigour and animation in the inferior ranks of society; in the latter, the ability and information of the middle and lower classes compensate, in the end, the weakness and vacillation of government. In the first instance, the government forces greatness upon the people; in the latter, the people force greatness upon the government. Hence the despotic state will be generally successful if a contest occurs in the outset; but the democratic community, if it withstands the shock, is more likely to prove victorious in the end; and hence a nation which, like the Roman in ancient, or the British in India in modern times, unites the foresight of patrician direction with the vigour of democratic execution, can hardly fail for a time at least to obtain the empire of the world.

But while the steady persevering policy of the imperial cabinet, joined to the remarkable succession of able sovereigns who, from the time of Peter the Great, have swayed the Russian sceptre, has hitherto at least drawn forth talent in a surprising manner, both in the civil and military career, from the inferior ranks in the state; yet a latent, but almost incurable source of weakness is to be found in the all but universal corruption which pervades inferior functionaries in every part of the empire. Doubtless there are some exceptions even in humble stations; and in the dignified situations of governors of provinces or fortresses, or high commands in the army, many of the most upright, patriotic, and honourable men in Europe are to be found. But these are the exceptions, not the rule. Generally speaking, corruption is universal in all but the higher officers of government, and even among them it is far from being unusual. The vast extent of the empire; the helpless condition and ignorance of the great majority of its inhabitants; the habits of abject submission to authority which they have imbibed from their religion, or derived from their eastern origin; the viceregal pomp in which the governors of the principal provinces live; the distance of their governments from the central power; and the boundless authority which

36.
Universal
corruption
which pre-
vails in the
inferior
authorities.

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¹ Slade's
Russia in
1838, p. 370,
371. Brem-
ner, i. 344,
350.

37.
Efficacy of
the Secret
Police, and of
the Em-
peror's ven-
geance.

they enjoy—all conspire to render abuses easy, detection difficult, and punishment dangerous. The salaries enjoyed by the persons in authority are in general small, and their expenses considerable: it is perfectly understood, what is almost universally practised, that they make up the difference in perquisites, presents, or fees, which soon degenerate into absolute corruption. The denunciation of crime is often followed by the discovery and punishment of the criminal, seldom by restitution or redress: the official robber comes in place of the private depre-dator, and the last state of the injured party is often worse than the first.^{1*}

In every country, however, except the most degraded, and those bordering on immediate ruin, there is, practically speaking, some check on the abuses of government. This check, which in Turkey was long found in the religious sway of the ulema, or the armed terrors of the janissaries, who, though no small abuse themselves, were the chief restraint on abuses in others, has hitherto in Russia been found in the unwearied activity, moral courage, and impartial severity of the emperors. A secret police is established through all parts of the Muscovite dominions. They are to Russia what the Lion's Mouth was to Venice, and, in a certain degree, supply the want of that perpetual check upon all but democratic corruption which the unfettered press of free countries occasions. The members of this police are known to every one, and are, in an especial manner, an object of apprehension to persons in authority. They collect information, receive secret complaints, accumulate evidence, and are in constant correspondence with the emperor, by whom the stroke of justice is to be dealt out. When a victim is selected against whom the evidence is clear, and whose enormities loudly call for public example, an order suddenly arrives for his seizure, degradation from office, and dismissal to Siberia. If he is of so high rank or station as to render such punishment difficult or dangerous to subordinate functionaries, the emperor himself

* Information as to crimes is often avoided from its only superadding the vexation of a prosecution, to no purpose, to the loss already sustained. It is seldom that stolen property, though often recovered, reaches the private sufferer. The head of the police at Odessa, on a salary of £250 a-year, makes £3000.—SLADE'S *Germany and Russia in 1838-9*, 385-389; BREMNER, i. 46.

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sets out in his britchska, travels post, with almost railway speed, a distance of a thousand or two thousand miles; calls the delinquent out at the head of his troops; and not unfrequently the terrible example is exhibited of a governor, holding almost royal dignity and authority, being seized unexpectedly when surrounded by his soldiers, his epaulettes torn from his shoulders, his head shaven, and himself sent off, in the dress of a convict, to the fortresses of Poland or the mines of Siberia. Alexander, notwithstanding his natural gentleness of disposition, and, still more, the present Emperor Nicholas, whose moral courage no dangers can daunt, have been particularly remarkable for the vigour, celerity, and impartiality, with which they exercised this awful but necessary attribute of sovereignty.¹

¹ Slade, 370,
373. Brem-
ner, i. 350,
351.

This system, however, though it may and does establish an important check, at least upon the higher class of functionaries, when carried into execution by the justice of an Alexander or the energy of a Nicholas, who do not hesitate to travel from one end of the empire to the other, to inflict punishment on a powerful delinquent, is attended with obvious hazard and liability to abuse. Personal, and, still more, moral courage cannot always be reckoned upon on the throne; the dissolute days of the Empress Elizabeth may return, and the functionaries of the empire may be delivered over to impunity or connivance, to enable a voluptuous monarch to enjoy undisturbed the pleasures of the court or the seraglio at St Petersburg. It is impossible to contemplate without shuddering the probable condition of the empire if such a state of things should arise—if a modern Sejanus were to wield the powers of the secret police, only to denounce the virtuous or induce the confiscation of the wealthy; if the numerous spies throughout the Muscovite dominions were to be employed, as the infamous informers whom the pen of Tacitus has consigned to the execration of ages, in ransacking the provinces for worth to oppress, or iniquity to reward; and obedient millions were, as then, to hail alike a Trajan or a Nero. Reflections of this kind arise unbidden in the mind upon the contemplation of the Russian empire. They recall at every step the mournful impression, that in its annals if a Caligula may be suc-

38.
Evils and
dangers of
this system.

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ceeded by a Nerva, an Antoninus may give place to a Commodus ; and they are fitted to inspire a deeper thankfulness for those institutions which, in the free states of western Europe, amidst all their concomitant evils, establish public prosperity on a broader basis, and strengthen the forces with which virtue combats the inroads of wickedness.

39.
Extraordi-
nary influ-
ence of reli-
gion in
Russia.

In this eternal conflict between the principles of good and evil, there is one, and one only, sheet-anchor to which Russia has to trust, and it constitutes the grand distinction between European and ancient civilisation. RELIGION is all-powerful with the bulk of the nation : it forms the true national bond of the empire ; the foundation at once of the authority of the throne and the morality of the people. When Alexander, amidst the terrors of the French invasion, issued proclamations breathing devout confidence in Almighty protection, and invoking the prayers of the Church to the throne of grace to aid the warriors in the deliverance of their country, he appeared to the astonished French to have gone back to the days of the Crusades, and to utter an incomprehensible jargon of mysticism and superstition. He spoke the language, however, of all others the most calculated to rouse the national efforts ; he touched a chord which vibrated alike in the hearts of the rich and the poor ; he inspired that lofty spirit, that sublime patriotism, which, looking for its reward in another world, is superior to all the dangers and temptations of the present. Nor was his policy erroneous, even with reference to worldly success. The lever was worth the wielding which broke the power of Napoleon ; the enthusiasm must ever command respect which fired the torches of Moscow.

40.
State of the
church and
the clergy.

The Greek, as is well-known, is the Established Church of Russia, and that to which nineteen-twentieths of the people adhere. Its doctrines coincide in the main with those of the Romish persuasion, and the mass constitutes the chief part of its public worship ; but it differs from the Church of Rome in two essential particulars—the marriage of the parish priests, and the spiritual authority of the Pope. The first is enjoined, instead of being prohibited ; the second denied, instead of being obeyed. The worship of figures, statues, or graven images of any kind,

is unknown ; but ample amends is made in the innumerable crosses which are on almost every occasion made on the breast, and the devout adoration bestowed on painted or other *flat* representations of our Saviour, or their favourite saints. Among the dignified clergy are many men of profound learning and enlightened piety ; but the great mass of the parochial priests are little if at all elevated above the peasants by whom they are surrounded, whose labours they share, and to whose manners they are generally assimilated. Drinking and other gross vices are very frequent among them ; and not a few are to be found among the convicts of Siberia, suffering the just punishment of their crimes.¹

¹ Bremner,
ii. 118.

Still the elements of incalculable usefulness are to be found among the Russian clergy. They are all supported by land of their own, which renders them independent, at least so far as subsistence is concerned. The profession of the clergy is in a manner hereditary, the sons of serfs not being permitted by their landlords to enter an employment which would deprive them of their services as labourers ; and they are looked up to with unbounded veneration by their flocks. The most pernicious doctrines of the Romish church—purgatory, dispensations, indulgences—as well as predestination, election, and other rigid Calvinistic tenets, are unknown. In the gradual elevation and cultivation of this established body of spiritual labourers, the true secret of Russian amelioration is to be found. All the efforts of its government should be directed to this object. Doubtless, in the present age, much that may be turned by scepticism into ridicule is to be found in their customs. But the experienced observer, versed in the ways of human wickedness, surrounded by the profligacy of civilised heathenism, and acquainted with the necessity of impressing the mass of men by considerations or acts which strike the senses, will not slight even the countless crossings on the breast, and bowing to the ground, of the Russian peasantry. He will acknowledge in these rites the invaluable marks of spiritual sway which are thus testified by an illiterate people ; he will hope that an antidote to the temptations of the senses may thus be provided ;² and expect more from a people

41.
The utility of
the church.

² Bremner,
ii. 118, 129.

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42.
Peculiar political system
of the Russian cabinet.

thus impressed, than from the orgies of infidelity or the worship of the Goddess of Reason.

The policy of the Russian cabinet, from the earliest time that the Muscovite power has stood forth an object of alarm to the surrounding nations, has been governed by one ruling principle, which differs widely from that of any people who have hitherto made a great impression on human affairs. It is neither founded on the haughty maxim of the Romans, to spare the submissive and subdue the proud, nor the more politic system of the English, whether in Europe or Asia, to support the weak against the strong. It rests on a combination of physical strength with diplomatic address, of perseverance in object with versatility in means, which was never before exhibited on the theatre of the world. Its leading characteristic has been explained, perhaps with more candour than prudence, by the eloquent Russian historian Karamsin:—"The object and the character of our military policy has invariably been, to seek to be at peace with every body, and to *make conquests without war*; always keeping ourselves on the defensive, placing no faith in the friendship of those whose interests do not accord with our own, and losing no opportunity of injuring them, without ostensibly breaking our treaties with them."¹ The slightest survey of Russian history must be sufficient to show that this character is well-founded; and that, formidable as the military power of the state is, it has prevailed in every age rather from pacific encroachments than warlike subjugation.

¹ See Bjornsjerna on Brit. Emp. in East, 244.

43.
Its immense physical advantages for such a system.

It has been observed that Russia can hardly fail in the end to obtain the victory over all her enemies, for she has two powerful allies always on her side—*time* and *space*. Relying with well-founded confidence on the inaccessible nature of the Muscovite territory—secured from attack on the north and east by the ices of the Pole and the deserts of Tartary—open to invasion from the European powers only on the frontier of Poland, and capable there of wearing out even the greatest armies of the western world, by simply retreating until the invader is enveloped in clouds of Asiatic horse, or finds his winding-sheet in the snows of an arctic winter—the cabinet of St Petersburg has the

means, without material danger to itself, of profiting by the weakness and dissensions of its enemies. By never provoking war till a favourable opportunity occurs of prosecuting it to advantage, it can march, without ever receding, from one acquisition to another. The Russians rarely originate a contest, but are always ready to carry it on. Passion seldom makes them anticipate the period of action ; success never relaxes the sinews of preparation.

So formidable is their weight, when fairly roused to exertion, that the powers with whom they are engaged in war, despairing of making any durable impression on such a colossus, are generally glad, even after victory, to purchase a respite from hostility by a cession of territory. Surprising to say, Russia has reaped greater advantages from her defeats than other nations from their victories. Even the disaster of Friedland was immediately followed by an important acquisition of territory ; and the conferences of Tilsit brought her frontiers to the mouth of the Danube and the head of the Gulf of Bothnia. He must be little read in European annals, who is not aware how uniformly this system has been pursued by the Russian cabinet, and how signal has been the success with which it has been attended. Never since the god Terminus first receded with the Roman eagles in the provinces beyond the Euphrates, has so steady and uninterrupted an advance been made by an empire towards universal dominion ; and it is hard to say, whether it has prevailed most by the ability of diplomatic address, or the vigour of warlike achievement.

When Peter the Great mounted the throne of Russia in 1689, she had no seaport but the half-frozen one of Archangel ; and his first naval effort was the construction of two small vessels, which were floated down the Don to the Sea of Azoff. Secluded in boundless solitudes, the Muscovite territory was hardly known to the European nations, and the Muscovite power estimated as nothing by the European cabinets. His successes over the Swedes gave him the first harbour which Russia possessed on the Baltic, but Smolensko was still the frontier town towards Poland ; and Moscow, dimly descried through the haze of distance, was imperfectly known by having been twice taken and once burned by the victorious squadrons of the

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44.

It is in consequence invariably a gainer by the issue of wars.

45.

Successive conquests of the Russians in their early history.

- CHAP. Lithuanians or Tartars. The battle of Pultowa and the
LXXI. treaty of Neustadt first gave the Russians the province of
1812. Livonia, and the site where Cronstadt and St Petersburg
Aug. 30, now stand ; the disasters of the Pruth did not perma-
1721. nently check the progress of the empire. The partition
Signed Sept. of 1772 brought its frontier on the side of Poland to the
1773. Dwina and the Dnieper ; by the treaty of Kainardgi, the
1774. Muscovite standards were brought down to the Crimea
1781. and the Sea of Azoff ; vast acquisitions from Tartary,
larger than the whole German empire, next spread its
dominion over the boundless tracts of Central Asia ; the
ukase of 1783 extended its sway over the Crimea, and
the vast plains which stretch between the Euxine and the
1781 to 1783. Caspian, as far as the foot of the Caucasus. The treaty of
Jassy advanced their frontier to the Dniester, and brought
1792. the now flourishing harbour of Odessa beneath their rule ;
1793. the infamous spoliation of 1793 gave them the command
1794. of Lithuania ; the conquests of Suwarroff in 1794 extended
their frontier to the Vistula, and the provinces embracing
nearly half of the old kingdom of Poland. Even the
disasters of Friedland and the treaty of Tilsit rounded
1 Marten's their eastern frontier, by no inconsiderable province, at
Sup. v. voce the expense of their ally, Prussia.¹
Russia.
46. Great and alarming as these encroachments were, they
Their pro- yet yield in magnitude and importance to the prodi-
gress in later gious extension which subsequent events have given to
times. the Russian empire. By the conferences at Tilsit, she
acquired the liberty of pursuing without molestation her
conquest over the Swedes and Turks ; and the treaties of
Sept. 17, Stockholm in 1809, and Bucharest in 1812, gave her in
1809. consequence the whole of Finland, as far as the head of
June 1, 1812. the Gulf of Bothnia, and extended her southern frontier
to the Pruth, so as to confer the inestimable advantage of
including the mouths of the Danube in her dominions.
The astonishing victories of 1813 and 1814, and her for-
midable attitude at the close of the war, secured for her,
at the congress of Vienna, not only a recognition of these
important conquests, but the still more valuable acqui-
sition of the Grand-duchy of Warsaw, which brought her
frontier to within a hundred and eighty miles of both
Berlin and Vienna, without the intervention of any
defensible frontier to either. Various conquests over the

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Ukases, 1800
1803, 1805,
1806, 1814,
1828.

1829.

1834.

¹ Progress of
Russia in the
East, i. 164.
Lond. 1838.

47.

Napoleon's
account of
the power of
Russia.

Circassians and Persians carried the Muscovite eagles, between 1800 and 1814, across the Caucasus, and added the beautiful province of Georgia to their dominions; while the treaty of Turkaman Chai, in 1828, brought the bastions of Erivan and the peak of Ararat within their grasp, and rendered the waters of the Araxes the southern frontier of their Asiatic territories. If the war so imprudently provoked by the Turks, in 1828, has not ostensibly added to the dominions of Russia, it has done more; it has given security to, and rendered unassailable, those which she already enjoyed. Wallachia and Moldavia are now her tributary possessions; the Danube is in reality her southern European boundary; her eastern provinces almost encircle the Black Sea; while by the infatuation of England, in refusing the Turks aid against Mehemet Ali, a few years after, she has acquired the exclusive command of the Dardanelles. The Euxine can be navigated only by her vessels of war; and her navy in the south has acquired the immense advantage of possessing a vast inland lake, where navigation is difficult, and seaman-ship may be acquired, while access to enemies is excluded, and foreign attack may be defied.¹

It is impossible to deny, and fruitless to attempt to disguise, that an empire of such extent and resources, is in the highest degree formidable to the liberties of Europe, and from its rapid increase of numbers is daily becoming more so. What Macedonia was to Greece, that Russia is to Europe: happy if it could be said that the resemblance stopped there, and that the inconstancy, improvidence, and impatience of taxation of the Athenian people, bore no resemblance to the similar characteristics by which the democracy in the British islands is now distinguished. Napoleon has left a graphic and warning picture of the capability of Russia alike to repel foreign invasion, and conduct external aggression, if led by an able and enterprising chief. "Backed," said he, "by the eternal ices of the Pole, which must for ever render it unassailable in rear or flank, it can only be attacked even on its vulnerable front during three or four months in the year, while it has the whole twelve to render available against us. It offers to an invader nothing but the rigours, sufferings, and privations of a desert soil, of a nature half dead and

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frozen ; while its inhabitants will ever precipitate themselves with transport towards the delicious climates of the south. To these physical advantages, we must join an immense population, brave, hardy, devoted, passive ; and vast nomad tribes, to whom destitution is habitual, and wandering is nature. One cannot avoid shuddering at the thought of such a mass, unassailable alike on the flanks and rear, being able at any time with impunity to inundate you ; while, if defeated, it has only to retire into the midst of its snows and ices, where pursuit is impossible, and reparation of loss easy. It is the Antæus of the fable, which cannot be overcome but by seizing it in the middle, and stifling it in the arms ; but where is the Hercules to be found who will attempt such an enterprise ? We could alone attempt it, and the world knows what success we have had. Show me an Emperor of Russia, brave, able, and impetuous—in a word, a Czar who is worthy of his situation, and Europe is at his feet. He may begin his operations at the distance only of one hundred leagues from the two capitals of Vienna and Berlin, the sovereigns of which are the only obstacles he has to apprehend. He gains the one by seduction, subdues the other by force, and he is soon in the midst of the lesser princes of Germany, most of whom are his relations or dependents. A few words on liberation and independence will set Italy on fire. Assuredly, in such a situation, I should arrive at Calais by fixed stages, and be the arbiter of Europe.”¹

¹ Nap. in Las Cases, iv. 81, 82.

48.
Description
of St Petersburg.

ST PETERSBURG, the capital of this boundless dominion, is not less surprising as a work of art, than the empire of which it is the head, is as the growth of nature. Little more than a century ago, the site of this noble metropolis was a salt-marsh, lying between the Lake Ladoga and the Baltic Sea, in which the natural sterility of the north was enhanced by unhealthy swamps and a wretched soil. It is now one of the most splendid capitals in the world, containing three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, and excelling any metropolis in Europe in the grandeur of its design and durability of the materials of which its public edifices are composed. The discerning eye of Peter the Great first appreciated the commercial advantages of its situation, and his perseverance over-

came the physical disadvantages with which it was surrounded. At an enormous expense of life and treasure, his despotic power overcame the formidable obstacles of nature, and amidst the marshes of Livonia erected a noble gateway to European civilisation. Vessels of heavy burden, indeed, cannot come up to St Petersburg; but its outwork of Cronstadt possesses a spacious harbour, where fifty sail of the line can lie in safety, defended by stupendous and impregnable bulwarks from external assault; while the vast power of the Czars, guided by European skill, but inspired by Oriental imagination, has constructed the metropolis of their empire on a scale of solidity and magnificence to which no parallel is to be found in modern times.¹

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¹ Lond. i. 182.
Malte Brun,
vi. 510.

More than in any other capital in Europe, its public edifices are built in a style which seems to aim at eternal duration. The Russian emperors have ransacked all the parts of their immense dominions to obtain the most costly materials for their construction. The granite which is scattered in huge masses through the marshes of Livonia, the marble which lies buried in the mountains of Taurida, compose the columns which decorate the exterior of these edifices; while the malachite of Siberia, the lapis-lazuli of the Lake Baikal, and the porphyry and precious stones of the Ural mountains, confer a matchless lustre on their interior apartments. The comparatively level surface on which it stands must ever prevent St Petersburg from vying with Rome, Moscow, Naples, Edinburgh, or Constantinople, in the beauty of its situation, or the imposing character of its distant aspect; and the construction of the greater part of the private buildings of brick, is a bar to the metropolis acquiring that historic interest which arises from the sight of the dwellings of many successive generations, standing side by side, like the shadows of the dead, to impress the living. But the sublime public edifices, which the magnificence of successive sovereigns has erected in different reigns, remain enduring monuments of the vast power and great achievements of the Czars. The quays of granite will long attest the prophetic conceptions and far-seeing sagacity of Peter the Great; *

49.
Its public
edifices.

* These quays, built of vast masses of solid granite, are, beyond all doubt, the finest in Europe. All the principal buildings in the metropolis are assem-

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¹ Bremner's
Russia, i. 82,
84. Lond. i.
92, 93. Malte
Brun, vi.
504, 507.

the imperial palace, the façade of the admiralty, the colonnade of the church of Cazan,* are durable proofs of the lofty spirit and grand ideas of Catherine. Not less do the church of St Isaac, destined to rival, if it cannot equal, St Peter's itself in magnitude and splendour,† and the noble pillar,‡ which exceeds the columns of Trajan and Antoninus in elevation, and will equal the obelisks of Egypt in durability, seem destined to convey to the latest generations, a faithful image of the warlike achievements and religious character which have secured immortal celebrity for the name of Alexander.¹

50.
Importance
of this sketch
of Russia.

The preceding sketch of the empire which has arisen to such an extraordinary eminence in recent times, will not be deemed misplaced by the reflecting reader even in a work of general history. It becomes the more appropriate, as it will be followed in a future chapter by a similar description of the progress and institutions of the Anglo-Saxon race in America: exhibiting thus, in the close of the wars of the French Revolution, portraits of the two mighty families of mankind who have risen to exalted destinies during the strife, and which, for good or for evil, have now, in an indelible manner, affixed their impress upon the history of the species.

"They are little acquainted," says Marshal St Cyr, "with the progress of ambition, who are surprised that Napoleon undertook the war in Russia. It is the nature of that desire, as of all other vehement passions, to be insatiable.

bled on their sides—the winter palace, the admiralty, the English quay.—BREMNER, i. 82-83.

* The dome of this noble church resembles that of St Peter's at Rome, and it has a splendid converging colonnade in front, like its great prototype, of one hundred and thirty-two pillars. The interior rests on fifty-four beautiful pillars of gray granite, each of a single stone.—BREMNER, i. 98.

† The columns which support this gigantic cathedral are to be fifty-eight feet long, each of a single stone of polished granite. There are also to be forty-eight stairs of the same polished material. These columns are exactly the size of the celebrated ones, so well known to travellers, in the interior of the baths of Dioclesian at Rome.—See LONDONDERRY, i. 92.

‡ This column is one hundred and fifty-four feet high, including the figure at the top, and its diameter is fifteen feet. It is composed of mottled red granite, like that at Peterhead in Scotland, but susceptible of a higher polish. The column in the Place Vendôme is one hundred and forty feet, that in St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, with the figure, one hundred and fifty-two feet. The column of Alexander stands on massy blocks of granite, and is distinguished by its severe and awful simplicity. The shaft of the stone is eighty-four feet high, and on its top stands a statue, not of Alexander, *but of Religion*, blessing the surrounding city. It has a pedestal and capital of bronze, made from cannon taken in the war of 1828 and 1829 from the Turks.—BREMNER, i. 88.

Every gratification it receives only renders it the more vehement, until at length it oversteps the bounds of physical nature, and quenches itself in the flame it has raised. Napoleon knew well that his empire was founded on the prestige of popular opinion; that to maintain that opinion it was necessary that he should continually advance; that the moment his triumphs ceased his throne began to totter. The public, habituated to victory by his successes, were no longer to be dazzled by ordinary achievements: he felt that his later triumphs must eclipse those of his earlier years; that if he only equalled them, he would be thought to have retrograded; that victories might have sufficed for the General of the Republic, but conquest must attend the steps of the Emperor of the West. To overthrow Austria, or overrun Italy, might suffice for him in the commencement of his career, but nothing could revive the enthusiasm of the people in later times but the destruction of the Colossus of the North. From the moment that he launched into the path of victory, he had periled his fortune on a single throw—universal dominion or a private station. Such is the permanent law of nature; the principle which leads to the punishment of national equally as of individual sins; the curb at once on the pride of aristocracy, the madness of democracy, and the rage of conquest; the fetter which checks the excesses of men, and the limit which restrains the rulers of nations.”¹

Since the fall of the Roman empire, no monarch had ever attained the commanding station which Napoleon occupied at the commencement of the Russian war. The influence of Charlemagne extended over a smaller surface, and embraced only barbarous states: the hordes of Timour were hardly as numerous, and incomparably inferior in discipline and equipment. Even the myriads of Attila or Genghis Khan exhibited no similar combination of the muniments of war, and foreboded no such permanent subjection of the liberties of mankind. From the shores of the Baltic to the mountains of Calabria, from the sands of Bordeaux to the forests of the Vistula, the whole forces of Europe were marshalled at his will; the accumulated wealth of ages was turned to the support of one gigantic power; and the military prowess which centuries of glory

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51.

Napoleon's
secret reasons
for the war
with Russia.

¹ St Cyr,
Hist. Militaire, iii. 2,
3.

52.

Vast extent
of his power
for that
enterprise.

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had fostered in rival states, was combined under the banners of one victorious leader. The acknowledged supremacy of his genius had extinguished the jealousies even of the armies who had suffered most in his career. The Austrians and Italians, the Prussians and Bavarians, marched in the same ranks with the French and the Poles. The partition of Poland, the humiliation of Prussia, the conquest of Austria, were for a time forgotten: the conquerors of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena, were to be seen side by side with the vanquished in these disastrous fields. However much the sense of present humiliation might oppress the governments, or the recollection of recent wrongs rankle in the minds of the people he had vanquished, the necessity of present submission was felt by all. One only passion, the desire of conquest, animated the varied bands who followed his standard; one only career, that of military glory, remained to the youth in the realms he had subdued.¹

¹ Segur, i.
125. Vict. et
Conq. xxi.
119, 127.
De Pradt.
Varsovie en
1812, 48, 54.

53.

Universal
enthusiasm
with which
the expedi-
tion was re-
garded in the
French em-
pire.

During the spring of 1812 the whole roads of France and Germany were thronged by cavalry, infantry, and artillery, hastening to the scene of the approaching conflict. The varied aspect and splendid equipment of these troops, excited the strongest feelings of enthusiasm in the people through whom they passed. It appeared impossible that any human efforts could resist the immense force which was converging towards the Vistula. The presence of Napoleon ensured victory; immediate advancement and lasting glory awaited those who distinguished themselves in the combats that were approaching. Such was the general enthusiasm which was excited in every part of the Emperor's vast dominions, that young men of the richest and the noblest families eagerly solicited employment in an expedition where success appeared certain, resistance impossible, and danger unlikely. All heads were swept away by the torrent; ambition, in every age and rank, was dazzled by the apparent brilliancy of the prospect. The expedition, said they, which is preparing, will throw that of Egypt into the shade. Never had the instinct of war, the passion for military glory, more strongly seconded the ambition of the chief of an empire. "We are setting out for Moscow, but we will soon return," were the words with which the joyous

youth every where took leave of their parents, their relations, their friends. The march to St Petersburg or Moscow seemed only a military promenade—a hunting party of six months' duration, in which little danger was to be met, but ample excitement experienced—a last effort, which would place the empire of Napoleon, and the glory of France, beyond the reach of danger. The magnificence of the spectacle, and the brilliancy of the prospect, spread these feelings even amongst the people of the vanquished states: the expected restoration of Poland, and humiliation of Russia, gave an air of romance to the approaching expedition: and thousands breathed wishes for its success, who were destined soon to be aroused by nobler emotions, or to perish in a holier cause.¹

¹ Segur, i. 101, 128, 131. Fain, MS. de 1812, i. 46, 47. De Pradt, Varsovie en 1812, 58.

Notwithstanding, however, the general enthusiasm which animated the warlike multitude, the different nations of whom it was composed were inspired by very different feelings; and, though the enthusiasm of military success retained the soldiers of all the states in willing subjection, and the resplendent chains of the empire held their inhabitants for the time in sullen obedience, yet the elements of discord existed, and it might have been foreseen would break out, if any serious disaster befell the head of the confederacy. The Prussians beheld with ill-suppressed grief their banners associated with those of the conqueror and oppressor of their country: the Austrians, after having contended for twenty years with France, blushed at seeing themselves ranged as auxiliaries under the power with whom they had so long struggled for mastery; even the Germans of the Rhenish Confederacy, notwithstanding their longer union with the troops of Napoleon, were filled with discontented feelings, and could not disguise the conviction, that every victory they gained for the imperial despot was riveting more firmly the fetters about their own necks.*

54.

Different feelings of the troops of different nations.

* Well might the Russians exclaim with the British chief in Tacitus—
“Nostris illi discessionibus ac discordiis clari, vitia hostium in gloriam exercitus sui vertunt; quem contractum ex diversissimis gentibus, *ut secundæ res tenent, illa adversæ dissolvent*: nisi si Gallos, et Germanos, et (pudet dictu) Britannorum plerosque, licet dominationi alienæ sanguinem commodent, diutius tamen hostes quam servos, fide et affectu teneri putatis: metus et terror est infirma vincula caritatis; quæ ubi removeris qui timere desierint odisse incipiunt.”—
TACITUS, *Agricola*, 32.

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¹ Chambray,
Guerre de
Russie, i. 165,
166.

The Poles alone, cheered by the anticipated restoration of their country, and indignant at the repeated wrongs they had experienced from Russia, advanced with joyful steps to the conflict, and prepared to strike for the cause of national independence, not for the interests or ambition of any external power. Yet, such is the marvellous effect of military subordination, and of the point of military honour, that the enormous assemblage of armed men were animated by one common feeling of warlike enthusiasm, and the commands of Napoleon were as readily obeyed by the Italians, Germans, or Prussians, as by the Guards of the French Empire.¹

55.
Disinclination of the
marshals and
older officers
for the cam-
paign.

In one important particular, however, the composition of the army was very different from what it had been in the earlier periods of the Republic. Though the young officers and fresh conscripts, who had their fortunes to make, were animated with the utmost ardour, yet the older generals and marshals, whose fortunes were made, and in whom age was beginning to extinguish the fires of youth, were by no means equally eager for the contest. Having nothing further to look to in military advancement, and not feeling "the necessity of conquest to existence," which, in every period of his career, was so strongly experienced by their chief, they beheld with ill-disguised aversion the mortal conflict in which they were now about to be engaged, and sighed for their palaces, their chateaux, and their pleasures, instead of the hardships and privations of a Russian campaign. Napoleon perceived and lamented this change in his old companions in arms: he felt no such refrigeration in himself, and was astonished that they did not follow him in the close of his career with the same ardour as in its commencement. Unable, however, to overcome their repugnance to bold counsels, he gradually estranged himself from their society, restrained his burning thoughts within his own bosom, and not unfrequently withdrew from a council of marshals into an embrasure of a window, where he opened his mind in unreserved communication with some young general of division, whose ideas were more in harmony with the undiminished energy which he felt in his own breast.²

² Fain, i. 46,
47.

The Russian government was fully aware of the approaching danger, and had for a considerable period been

silently preparing to meet it. Upwards of a year before, a large portion of the Turkish army, as already noticed, had been withdrawn from the Danube, and the main strength of the empire collected on the Niemen.* The Emperor Alexander had, by the address of his aide-de-camp Chernicheff, obtained an apparently accurate detail of the strength of the Grand Army, its destination, and the corps of which it was composed; though, as was afterwards experienced, giving a deceptive idea of its strength greatly inferior to the reality. He resolved to oppose to the vast preparations of the French Emperor the indomitable perseverance of northern valour; and, without provoking the contest, to undergo every thing rather than yield in the strife. The nobles, at this crisis, rallied round the throne with a spirit worthy of the Roman senators; and the poor peasants, ignorant of the magnitude of the danger by which they were to be assailed, prepared to die in defence of their country and their religion. Military spirit prevailed to a considerable degree in the Russian army, but by no means to the extent which subsequently existed after the unparalleled successes of the war. The disastrous issue of all preceding contests with France, and the doubtful event of the war with the Turks, had spread a desponding feeling both through the government and the country. Alexander and his council were prepared indeed to resist; but it was rather with the mournful and magnanimous resolution of perishing in defence of their country, than from any confident hope of being able to achieve its deliverance. They had to contend with a monarch of consummate military talents, whose career of victory had been unbroken, commanding an army inured to conquest by twenty years of success, and who now led on the forces of more than half of continental Europe to overwhelm the resistance of its only remaining independent power.¹

In such a conflict they were well aware the chances of victory, the hope of success, lay all on the other side. Worldly motives, usually so powerful in the human breast, could in vain be appealed to: but Alexander found the means of meeting the emergency in those higher and more generous principles, which, unknown in ordinary times,

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56.

Views of the
Russian go-
vernment on
the approach-
ing contest.

¹ Bout. i. 103.
106. Sav. iii-
141.

57.

Religion and
patriotism,
the principles
to which they
appealed.

* *Ante*, Chap. lxi. § 89.

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unfelt by ordinary men, yet exist in every heart, if not overwhelmed by the intensity of selfish desires, and not unfrequently defeat all the calculations of the most experienced observers, by the brilliancy with which they shine forth on extraordinary occasions. RELIGION and PATRIOTISM were the principles to which the Russian government appealed in the awful crisis; and they met with a responsive echo in every heart within their dominions. Every proclamation to the people, every address to the nobles, breathed the language of religious or patriotic devotion. The Emperor, neither confident nor depressed, appeared prepared to combat to the last man in defence of his country, and, if necessary, be the last martyr in its cause. The French, like mankind in general, ridiculed sentiments of which they were ignorant, and stigmatised as fanatical the efforts of the Russian authorities to imprint a religious character upon the contest; little aware that the forces of revolution, in other words the passions of the world, cannot be successfully combated but by an appeal to religious emotion, that is, the motives of heaven; and that, when the Emperor Alexander elevated the standard of the cross, he invoked the only power that ever has, or ever will, arrest the march of temporal revolution.¹

¹ Fain, i. 76,
317.
Chamb. i.
176.

58.
Preparations
of the Rus-
sian govern-
ment to re-
sist the in-
vasion.

² Hard. ix.
274.

It was not without due consideration, and a full appreciation of the sacrifices with which it would be attended, that the Cabinet of St Petersburg had adopted the resolution of engaging in a war of life or death with the French empire. They had carefully studied the warfare of Wellington in Portugal; and a military memoir of extraordinary ability, still preserved in the archives of St Petersburg, had pointed to the sagacious and scientific campaign of that general in 1810 as the model on which the defensive system of Russia should be founded.² General Phull, who was the principal councillor of the Emperor on military subjects, strongly recommended a retreat into the interior, accompanied with operations of detachments on the enemy's flanks and rear, a plan which the Emperor the more approved, that its efficacy had been demonstrated in the English general's immortal stand at Torres Vedras. To support the system of operations, an intrenched camp, capable of containing the whole Russian army, had been

constructed at Drissa to defend the approach to St Petersburg. A strong *tête-du-pont* at Borissov covered the passage of the Berezina by the route of Moscow; and the ramparts of Smolensko, the bulwark of Old Russia, were armed with cannon, and put in a respectable state of defence. But none of these strongholds were capable of resisting the vast forces which Napoleon had at his disposal, nor indeed were they designed for that effect. They were intended only as obstacles to retard the advance of his army, leaving it to other and more powerful agents to accomplish his destruction.¹

¹ Clausewitz, Camp. of 1812, 13, 14. Bout. i. 164. Fain, i. 176.

For this purpose, the Russian armies, as those of Wellington did down the valley of the Tagus, were to retire slowly into the interior of the empire; the country, as they fell back, was to be denuded of its inhabitants, and laid waste; clouds of light horse were to harass the flanks and cut off the foraging parties of the advancing enemy; and every effort was to be made to rouse the rural population, and inspire them with a religious zeal in the great contest in which they were about to be engaged. By these means it was hoped the forces of the French Emperor, great as they undoubtedly were, would be gradually wasted away. Every step they advanced in a desolate realm would bring them nearer their ruin; and the very magnitude of his army would ultimately prove an insupportable encumbrance, from the impossibility of providing subsistence for such a multitude. But it was impossible to rouse a national spirit in Lithuania, because its inhabitants, ancient Poles, being seized with the desire of recovering their independence, were animated with the strongest feeling in favour of the invaders; and therefore this system could really be carried into effect only when the army reached Smolensko, the ancient frontier of Russia. And the erroneous information which Chernicheff had obtained at Paris as to the strength of the French army, led the Emperor to miscalculate the force which would be requisite to repel it, and rendered necessary a much further retreat, and more extensive sacrifices than had at first been contemplated.²

59. General plan of the campaign on their part.

² Chamb. i. 176, 177. Fain, i. 176. Bout. i. 164. Clausewitz, Camp. of 1812, 14.

The repeated defeats of the Russians, in the preceding wars with Napoleon, spread a desponding feeling throughout Great Britain in regard to the approaching con-

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60.

Desponding
feelings of the
English.

test. Taught by the disastrous consequences of former coalitions, the British government made no attempt to stake the last chance of Europe on the hazardous issue of continental war; and, contrary to all former precedent, they neither offered, nor would Russia accept, any pecuniary assistance. Mr Perceval stated in the House of Commons, before the war commenced, that Russia engaged in the contest on her own responsibility, and without any instigation on the part of England; and the Czar sought to animate the patriotism of the people by the assurance that they stood alone in the contest, and would share with none the glory of success.¹

¹ Parl. Deb.
May 7, 1812.

61.

Military pre-
parations of
the French
Emperor for
the contest.

The forces which Napoleon at that period commanded, amounted to the enormous number of twelve hundred thousand men, almost all in the highest state of discipline and equipment. Of these eight hundred and fifty thousand were native French, and of that body only three hundred thousand were engaged in the Spanish war. A population of forty-three millions in the French empire, and eight more in the kingdom of Italy and the Illyrian provinces, afforded apparently ample means of recruiting his losses. But the conscription had ceased to be productive from the arrival of the period when those destroyed in the early Revolutionary wars occasioned a chasm in the births of 1794 and 1795, and consequently in the population between eighteen and twenty years of age. For this reason a conscription of a hundred and twenty thousand men which had been decreed by the senate on 3d February 1811, and another of the like amount on the 20th December in the same year, had not produced any considerable addition to the effective strength of the army. Napoleon resorted, therefore, before engaging in this terrible contest, to an extraordinary method of providing for the security of his dominions.²

² Moniteur,
March 13,
1812. Bout.
i. 80, 81, 88.
Jom. iv. 52.

62.

Extraordi-
nary levy of
the ban and
arrière-bans in
France.

The whole inhabitants of the French empire, and of the kingdom of Italy, capable of bearing arms, were formed into three bans, as they were called—the first comprehending all those from twenty to twenty-six years of age; the second from twenty-six to forty; the third, from forty to sixty years of age. One hundred and twenty thousand of the first ban was immediately placed at the disposal of the minister of war. This extra-

ordinary measure, unknown in any former contest, both demonstrates how fatally the conscription had operated upon the male population of France, and may be regarded as one of the first prognostics that the empire had reached the limits of physical nature, and approached its fall. The weakness of age fell at once upon it, when the chasms occasioned by the dreadful wars of 1793 and 1794 appeared in the male population which should be available at this time for the purposes of the conscription. The total failure of the conscription after 1811, demonstrated that the early wars of the Revolution had mowed down the race from which the defenders of the empire should have sprung.¹

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¹ Senatus Consultum, March 13, 1812, Moniteur. Bout. i. 88, 89. Jom. iv. 52. Sav. v. 273. Vict. et Conq. xxi. 118, 119. Goldsmith, iv. 542, 723, and 751.

The Grand Army itself, which was now concentrated in Poland, or ready to support the movements of those in advance, was divided into thirteen corps of infantry and four of cavalry, and amounted to the immense aggregate of five hundred thousand men, besides a hundred thousand who afterwards joined, and took a part in the campaign.* Of these above eighty thousand were cavalry, and they were supported by thirteen hundred pieces of cannon. Nearly twenty thousand chariots or carts, of all descriptions, followed the army; and the horses employed in the artillery, the cavalry, and the conveyance of the baggage, amounted to the unprecedented number of one hundred and eighty-seven thousand. No such stupendous accumulation of armed men had yet been formed in modern times, or probably since the beginning of the world. Of this prodigious armament, however, only two hundred thousand were native French; the remainder were Germans, Italians, Poles, Swiss, and Austrians, whom the terror of the French arms had compelled, how unwillingly soever, to follow their banners. "*Exercitus mixtus ex colluvione omnium gentium; quibus non lex, non mos, non lingua communis; alius habitus, aliæ vestes, alia arma, alii ritus, alia sacra.*"² †

63.
Force of the French army.

² Liv. l. 28, c. 12. Jom. iv. 52. Chamb. i. 386. Oginski, iii. 138. Jom. iv. 52.

The forces which the Russian empire had to oppose to this crusade were much less considerable at the commencement of the campaign, but they were constantly

* See Appendix, A, Chap. lxxi.

† "An army made up of the dregs of all nations; which had no laws, customs, or language in common; whose dress, habits, arms, rites, and religion, were dissimilar."—LIVY, xxviii. Chap. 12.

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64.

Forces of the
Russians on
the frontier
and in the
interior.

increased as the war rolled into the interior of the empire; and before its close the armies on the two sides were nearly equal. Its regular forces amounted, in the close of 1811, to five hundred and seventeen thousand men; but of these nearly seventy thousand were in garrison, and the remainder dispersed over an immense surface, from the Danube to the Gulf of Finland, and from the Niemen to the Caucasus. Two successive levies had, however, been effected since that period, which furnished most seasonable supplies of disciplined men to the armies, as they were successively thinned by the casualties of war. To oppose the invasion of the French, the Russians had collected two hundred and seventeen thousand in the first line, and thirty-five thousand in the second; and the army of Moldavia, amounting to fifty thousand, ultimately appeared on the scene, and took an active share in the closing operations of the campaign. Their united strength was nearly three hundred thousand, of which fifty thousand were cavalry, and they brought into the field upwards of eight hundred pieces of cannon.* The forces of the French, therefore, exceeded those of the Russians by nearly three hundred thousand men; but the former were at an immense distance from their resources, and had no means of repairing their losses, whereas the latter were in their own country, and supported by the devotion of a patriotic and courageous people. By the foresight of the government, thirty-six depots, in the provinces bordering on the supposed theatre of war, had been formed to supply the losses occasioned by the campaign, and proved of the most essential service in the progress of the war.^{1†}

Napoleon's troops, at the commencement of the campaign, were divided into three great masses. The first, two hundred and twenty thousand strong, under the

* See Appendix, B, Chap. lxxi.

† Clausewitz gives the following account of the Russian force:—

On the Polish frontier,	180,000 men
On the Dwina,	30,000
In Finland,	20,000
In Moldavia,	60,000
Eastern frontier,	30,000
Interior,	50,000
Garrisons,	50,000
Cossacks,	20,000

440,000

¹ Bout. i. 106,
12, 152, 154.

immediate orders of the Emperor, was destined to overwhelm the first Russian army, under the command of Barclay de Tolly, who had only one hundred and twenty-seven thousand at his disposal. The second, consisting of seventy-five thousand, under Jerome, was to crush Prince Bagrathion, whose forces were only forty-eight thousand; the Viceroy, Eugene Beauharnais, at the head of seventy-five thousand, was charged with the important task of throwing himself between these two Russian armies, and preventing their reunion. Besides these great armies, the right wing of the French, thirty thousand strong, under Schwartzemberg, was opposed to Tormasoff, who had forty thousand under his orders; and the left, of the same strength, under Macdonald, was destined to act against Riga, where Essen, with an inconsiderable force, awaited his approach. In two months the Russians would have had a hundred and fifty thousand more men in the field: it was the desire to gain a decisive success before these came up, which made Napoleon anxious to begin the war.¹

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65.

Division of
Napoleon's
forces at the
outset of the
campaign.¹ Claus. 14.
Bout. i. 152,
157. Jom. iv
51, 53.
Segur, i. 139.

66.

General
aspect of the
Polish pro-
vinces adjoining
Russia.

The face of the country on the western frontier of Russia is in general flat, and in many places marshy. Vast woods of pine cover the plains, and the rivers flow in some places through steep banks, in others stagnate over extensive swamps, which often present the most serious obstacles to military operations. The roads, straight as an arrow, run in a direct line, amidst interminable forests of pine, the dark monotony of which impresses a feeling of melancholy on the mind. Cultivation in Lithuania is so inconsiderable in extent, that the fields of corn seem cut out of gloomy wastes of marsh or forest; the villages are few and miserable; the little industry which exists is owing to the Jews, who reside in the towns in great numbers. Inhabiting a rich country, the Poles are destitute of the common necessities of life: employed in raising magnificent crops of wheat, they seldom taste any thing but rye-bread, oats, or the coarsest barley. The miserable aspect of the country attracted the notice even of the careless followers of Napoleon's army. But the warlike spirit of the people was undecayed, and the peasants, equally with the nobles, retained that aptitude for war, and facility at assuming its discipline and duties, which in every age has formed their honourable characteristic.²

² Bout. i.
122, 123.
Labanme, 20.
Burnet's
Poland, i. 90.

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67.
Napoleon
leaves Paris.
Splendour of
his residence
at Dresden.

Napoleon left Paris on the 9th May: the Empress Maria Louisa accompanied him to Dresden. The whole sovereigns of Germany were there assembled, including the Emperor Francis and the King of Prussia. The Empress had left Vienna as a sacrifice to the interests of her country: she returned to the Elbe beside the conqueror of the world, surrounded by the pomp of more than imperial splendour. The theatres of Paris had been transferred to Dresden; the assembled courts of Europe there awaited her approach; the oldest potentates yielded to the ascendant of her youthful diadem. During the magnificent series of pageants which followed her arrival, flattery exhausted its talent and luxury its magnificence; and the pride of the Cæsars was forgotten in the glory of one who had risen upon the ruins of their antiquated splendour. No adequate conception can be formed of the astonishing power and grandeur of Napoleon, but by those who witnessed his residence on this occasion at Dresden. The Emperor occupied the principal apartments of the palace; his numerous suite were accommodated around; the august guests of the King of Saxony all looked to him as the centre of attraction. Four kings were frequently to be seen waiting in his antechamber; queens were the maids of honour to Maria Louisa. With more than eastern munificence he distributed diamonds, snuff-boxes, and crosses among the innumerable crowd of princes, ministers, dukes, and courtiers, who thronged with oriental servility around his steps. Whenever he appeared in public, nothing was to be heard but praises of his grandeur and magnificence. The vast crowd of strangers, the superb equipages which thronged the streets, the brilliant guards which were stationed in all the principal parts of the city, the constant arrival and departure of couriers from or towards every part of Europe, all announced the king of kings, who was now elevated to the highest pinnacle of earthly grandeur.¹

¹ Segur, i.
108. Jom.
iv. 40, 41.
Fain, i. 63,
67. De Pradt,
Varsovie, 36,
37. Las Cas.
ii. 361.

68.
His confident
anticipations
of success in
the cam-
paign.

No fears for the issue of the gigantic expedition which he had undertaken, ever crossed the mind of the Emperor, or of the cortege of kings and princes by whom he was surrounded. "Never," said he, "was the success of an expedition more certain; I see on all sides nothing but probabilities in my favour. Not only do I advance at the

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head of the immense forces of France, Italy, Germany, the Confederation of the Rhine, and Poland; but the two monarchies which have hitherto been the most powerful auxiliaries of Russia against me, have now ranged themselves on my side: they espouse my quarrel with the zeal of my oldest friends. Why should I not number in a similar class Turkey and Sweden? The former at this moment is, in all probability, resuming its arms against the Russians: Bernadotte hesitates, it is true; but he is a Frenchman: he will regain his old associations at the first cannon-shot; he will not refuse to Sweden so favourable an opportunity of avenging the disasters of Charles XII. Never again can such a favourable combination of circumstances be anticipated: I feel that it draws me on; and, if Alexander persists in refusing my propositions, I will pass the Niemen."¹ Marvellous as is the contrast between these anticipations and the actual issue of the campaign, the penetration of few men in Europe could at that time presage a different result from that which the French Emperor assumed as assured; and Madame de Staël expressed the almost universal opinion, that "when Napoleon was at Dresden in 1812, surrounded by all the sovereigns of Germany, and commanding an army of five hundred thousand men, it appeared impossible, according to all human calculation, that his expedition should not succeed."²

¹ Fain, i. 68, 69.

² De Staël, Rev. Franç. ii. 401.

No sooner had he arrived in Poland, than the Emperor was assailed by the cries of the peasantry, who were ruined by his soldiers. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions on his part to prevent pillage, and to provide for their necessities, the enormous multitude of men and horses who were assembled, speedily exhausted the country. It was in vain that his prudent foresight had provided numerous battalions of light and heavy chariots for the supply of the army; innumerable carriages laden with tools of every description, twenty-six squadrons of waggons stored with military equipages, several thousand light caissons, carrying luxuries as well as objects of necessity of every description, and six complete sets of pontoons. The wants of such a prodigious accumulation of troops, speedily exhausted all the means of subsistence which the country afforded, and all the stores

69.
Distress in Poland on the first entrance of the French army.
June 17.

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¹ Chamb. i.
164, 170.
Segur, i. 114,
115. Fain, i.
82, 83. De
Pradt, 85, 91,
93. Gour-
gaud, i. 103.

they could convey with them. Forced requisitions of horses, chariots, and oxen from the peasantry, soon became necessary; and the Poles, who expected deliverance from their bondage, were stripped of every thing they possessed by their liberators. To such a pitch did the misery subsequently arrive, that the richest families in Warsaw were literally in danger of starving, and the interest of money rose to eighty per cent. Yet such was the rapidity of the marches at the opening of the campaign, that the greater part of the supplies thus exacted were abandoned or destroyed before the army had advanced many leagues into the Russian territory.¹

70.

Prodigious
efforts of the
Emperor for
the supply of
his troops.
Feb. 24,
1812.

It was not, however, from any want of foresight and preparation, so far as human effort could go, that the troops were so soon driven to the necessity of subsisting by pillage. Never had such exertions been made to secure supplies for an army. Enormous magazines had been formed to provide for the wants of the troops in the campaign. By the treaty already mentioned, concluded with Prussia a short time before, that unhappy country was compelled to furnish two hundred and twenty thousand quarters of oats, twenty-four thousand of rice, two million bottles of beer, four hundred thousand quarters of wheat, six hundred thousand of straw, three hundred and fifty thousand of hay, six million pecks of oats, forty-four thousand oxen, fifteen thousand horses, three thousand six hundred carriages, harnessed and furnished with drivers and horses; and hospitals provided with every requisite for twenty thousand patients. At Dantzic, the grand depot of the army, innumerable military stores were collected, and magazines capable of being transported by water through the Frischaff to Königsberg, and by land across the country to Interberg, where they were received on the Niemen. The active and impassioned mind of the Emperor had long been incessantly occupied with this object; the whole day was passed in dictating letters to his generals on the subject; in the night he frequently rose from bed to reiterate his commands. "For masses such as are now to be put in movement," said he, "the resources of no country can suffice. All the caissons must be ready to be laden with bread, flour, rice, vegetables, and brandy;² besides what is requisite for the

² Segur, i.
120, 121, 124,
and Gour-
gaud, i. 127.
Fain, i. 92.
Chamb. i.
164.

moveable columns. My manœuvres may assemble in a moment four hundred thousand men at one point: the country will be totally unable to provide for them; every thing must be brought by themselves."

Before approaching the Niemen, the Emperor reviewed the principal corps of his army. On these occasions, according to his usual practice, he passed through the ranks of the soldiers, and inquired minutely into their wants and equipments. The veterans he reminded of the battles of the Pyramids, of the glories of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena: the conscripts seemed equally the object of attention; was their pay regularly received, were their rations faithfully served out, had they any complaints to make against their officers? Frequently he halted in the centre of a regiment, and, calling the troops around him, inquired what commissions were vacant, and who were most worthy to hold them. Having ascertained the age, services, and wounds of those specified, he immediately appointed them to the vacant situations in the presence of their comrades. Selecting one veteran from the ranks, he would remind him of the victory of the Pyramids: another he would himself decorate with the cross of the Legion of Honour, taken from his own breast, for his courage on the field of Austerlitz. To the standards of the distinguished regiments as they defiled past, riddled with shot and blackened with smoke, he bowed with respect. By attentions such as these, Napoleon gained the hearts of his soldiers, and produced that enthusiastic attachment to his person, which, as much as the splendour of his military talent, distinguished every period of his career.¹

71.
And to elevate their spirit.

¹ Segur, l. 123.

At length he approached the Niemen, and the numerous battalions of the Grand Army converged towards Kowno, which, being the extreme point of the salient angle where the Prussian projected into the Russian territory, seemed a favourable point for commencing operations. The infantry arrived in good order, and left but few stragglers behind; but the cavalry and artillery had already begun to suffer severely: the grass, the hay, the meadows, were soon entirely consumed by the enormous multitude of horses which passed along, and the succeeding columns suffered severely from the devastation

72.
Approach of the French army to the Niemen.

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June 17.

of those which had preceded them. Two hundred and twenty thousand men, and a hundred thousand horses, now concentrated at the point of junction of four different roads at Interberg on the Pregel, presented a mass of combatants unparalleled in modern times for their efficiency and splendour. Before setting out for the Niemen, the troops were all served with provisions to convey them beyond that river to Wilna, the capital of Russian Poland. But all the care of the Emperor and his lieutenants was unable to provide subsistence for such stupendous masses; the carriages and cattle which had been seized in Old Prussia, under a provision that they should be sent back as soon as they reached the Niemen, were still kept for service beyond that river, and the unhappy owners resumed the road to their homes, destitute either of money or provisions, and uttering the loudest complaints against the injustice with which they had been treated. Pillage and disorder were already universal on the flanks of the army; and it was easy to foresee that want of provisions would prove the great difficulty of the campaign. The masses, however, pressed on without intermission; column after column succeeded each other in ceaseless march; and at length on the 23d June, before daybreak, the imperial forces approached the river, which as yet was concealed by the great forest of Pilwiski, and the Emperor immediately mounted on horseback to reconnoitre the banks. His horse suddenly fell as he approached the shore, and he was precipitated on the sand.* Some one exclaimed, "It is a bad omen—a Roman would have retired:" but, without regarding the augury, he gave orders for the construction of three bridges, and retired to his quarters, humming the tune, "*Marlbrook s'en va à la guerre*," and repeating with martial emphasis the line, "*Ne sait quand il reviendra*."¹

June 23.

¹ Segur, i.
143. Fain, i.
92, 93. Jom.
iv. 52.
Chamb. i.
170, 173.

On the approach of night the following proclamation of the Emperor was read to the troops;—"Soldiers! the second war of Poland is commenced: the first was

* A similar incident occurred in ancient times, and on a hardly less momentous occasion. "C. Flaminius quum apud lacum Thrasymenum cum Hannibale conflicturus, convelli signa jussisset, lapso equo super caput ejus, humi prostratus est: Nihilque eo prodigio inhibitus, signiferis negantibus signa movere; suâ sede posse malum, ne ea continuo effodissent, minatus est. In ea acie, quindecim millia Romanorem cæsa, sex millia capta, decem millia fugata sunt."
—Livy.

terminated at Friedland and Tilsit, when Russia swore an eternal alliance with France, and war with England. Now she violates her oaths. She refuses to give any explanation of her strange conduct till the French eagles have repassed the Rhine, leaving our allies at her discretion. *Fate drags her on—let her destinies be fulfilled.* Does she imagine we are degenerated? Are we not still the soldiers of Austerlitz? We are placed between dishonour and war; our choice cannot be doubtful. Let us then advance, cross the Niemen, and carry the war into her own territory. The second Polish war will be as glorious as the first; but the peace we conclude shall be its own guarantee, and put an end to the fatal influence which for fifty years Russia has exercised in the affairs of Europe." The soldiers, grouped in circles, heard these animating words with enthusiasm, and immediately the signal to advance was given. Vast columns defiled out of the forest and hollows with which the banks of the river abounded, and pressed in silence to the margin of the stream; not a sound was heard but the measured tread of marching bands, not a light was suffered to shine on the vast and disciplined array of France. The troops halted and lay down on the edge of the river, too impatient to sleep, and eagerly gazing through the gloom at the Russian shore.¹

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73.

Napoleon's
proclamation
to his soldiers
on crossing
the river.
June 23.

¹ Segur, i.
144. Moni-
teur, July 1,
1812.

CHAPTER LXXII.

ADVANCE OF NAPOLEON TO MOSCOW.

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1812.

◆ 1.
Splendid
scene on the
crossing of
the river.
June 24.

AT one in the morning, the corps of Davoust broke up and crossed the river, and shortly after its advanced guard took possession of Kowno. The tent of the Emperor was placed on an eminence three hundred paces from the bank, and as the sun rose he beheld the resplendent mass slowly descending to the bridges. The world had never seen so magnificent an array as lay before him. Horse, foot, and cannon, in the finest order, and in the highest state of equipment, incessantly issued from the forest, and wound down the paths which led to the river: the glittering of the arms, the splendour of the dress, the loud shouts of the men as they passed the imperial station, inspired universal enthusiasm, and seemed to afford a certain presage of success. The burning impatience of the young conscripts; the calm assurance of the veteran soldiers; the confident ardour of the younger officers; the dubious presentiments of the older generals; filled every heart with thrilling emotion. The former were impatient for the campaign as the commencement of glory and fortune; the latter dreaded it as the termination of ease and opulence. None entered on it without anxiety and interest. No sinister presentiments were visible on the countenance of the Emperor; the joy which he felt at the recommencement of war communicated a universal degree of animation. Two hundred thousand men, including forty thousand horse, of whom twelve thousand were cuirassiers, cased in glittering steel, passed the river that day in presence of the Emperor.¹ Could the eye of prophecy have foreseen the thin and

¹ Segur, i. 144, 145.
Bout. i. 162.
Fain, i. 167.
Chamb. i. 172.

shattered remains of this countless host, which a few months afterwards were alone destined to regain the shores of the Niemen, the change would have appeared too dreadful for any human powers of destruction to have accomplished.

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The passage of troops continued incessantly during the 24th and 25th; and the cavalry under Murat, passing Davoust's corps, took the lead in the advance. The Viceroy and Jerome, at the head of their respective armies, crossed some days afterwards at Pily and Grodno, the former at the head of seventy, the latter of sixty-five thousand men, and immediately began to advance against the corps of Bagrathion, which lay in the opposite country; whilst Macdonald passed the Niemen at Tilsit, and on the 2d July Schwartzberg crossed the frontier by passing the Bug at Moguilmica. The Emperor Alexander was at a ball at the country-house of General Benning-sen, in the neighbourhood of Wilna, when the intelligence of the passage of the river reached him. He concealed the despatches, and remained with the company till its close, without exhibiting any change of manner, or revealing in any way the momentous news he had received.¹

2.
Passage of
the re-
mainder of
the army,
and arrival of
the intelli-
gence at
Wilna.

¹ Bout. i.
163. Chamb.
i. 173. Fain
i. 168.

On the same night, however, after the festivities were over, he prepared and published the following proclamation to the nation and the army:—"For long we have observed the hostile proceedings of the French Emperor towards Russia, but we always entertained the hope of avoiding hostilities by measures of conciliation; but, seeing all our efforts without success, we have been constrained to assemble our armies. Still we hoped to maintain peace by resting on our frontiers in a defensive attitude, without committing any act of aggression. All these conciliatory measures have failed: the Emperor Napoleon, by a sudden attack on our troops at Kowno, has declared war. Seeing, therefore, that nothing can induce him to remain at peace, all that remains for us is to invoke the succour of the Most High, and oppose our forces to the enemy. I need not remind the officers and soldiers of their duty, to excite their valour; the blood of the brave Selavonians flows in their veins. Soldiers! you defend your religion, your country, and your liberty. I am with you: God is against the aggressor." To the

3.
Proclamation
of the Em-
peror Alex-
ander to the
Russians on
the invasion.
June 25,
1812.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

1 Bout. i.
163, 165.
Oginski, iii.
154. Hard.
x. 142.

nation the commencement of the war was announced in a letter addressed to the Governor of St Petersburg, which concluded with these remarkable words :—" I have the fullest confidence in the zeal of my people, and the bravery of my soldiers. Menaced in their homes, they will defend them with their wonted firmness and intrepidity. Providence will bless our just cause. The defence of our country, of our independence and national honour, have forced me to unsheath the sword. *I will not return it to the scabbard as long as a single enemy remains on the Russian territory.*"¹

4.
Noble resolution of the Russian army and people. Their forces retreat on all sides.

The intelligence of the invasion of the French, and these moving addresses, excited the utmost enthusiasm in the people and the army. It was not mere military ardour or the passion for conquest, like that which animated the French troops ; but a deep-rooted resolution of resistance, founded on the feelings of patriotism and the spirit of devotion. Less buoyant at first, it was more powerful at last ; founded on the contempt of life, it remained unshaken by disaster, unsubdued by defeat. As the French army advanced, and the dangers of Russia increased, it augmented in strength ; and while the ardour of the invaders was quenched by the difficulties of their enterprise, the spirit of the Russians rose with the sacrifices which their situation required. It was with feelings of regret, therefore, that the Russian army received orders to retire before the enemy. This resolution had been previously taken, and all the commanders furnished with directions as to the route they were to follow. The enormous superiority of Napoleon rendered it hopeless to attempt any resistance, till time and the casualties incident to so long a march had thinned his formidable ranks. Nor was it long before the wisdom of this resolution became apparent. The sultry heat of the weather at the crossing of the Niemen, was succeeded by a tempest, the fury of which resembled the devastating hurricanes of tropical climates. Upon the countless multitudes of Napoleon, who traversed an exhausted country, covered with sterile sands or inhospitable forests, its violence fell with unmitigated severity. The horses perished by thousands from the combined effects of incessant rain and unwholesome provender ; one

hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, and five hundred caissons were left at Wilna from want of the means of transport; above ten thousand dead horses were found on the highway leading from the Niemen to that city alone; thirty thousand disbanded soldiers spread desolation round the army; and before it had been six days in the Russian territory, or a single shot had been fired, twenty-five thousand sick and dying men filled the hospitals of Wilna and the villages of Lithuania.¹

When the retreat commenced, the whole Russian armies were under the command of Alexander in person; and it was his orders which Count Barclay de Tolly, the minister at war, communicated to the different corps of the army. General Von Phull, a Prussian by birth, who had left the service of Frederick William after the disasters of 1806, and entered into that of Russia, was with the Emperor in the capacity of adviser; and it is owing to his advice that the general plan of the campaign, afterwards so admirably carried into execution by Barclay, is to be ascribed. He stood deservedly high in the Emperor's estimation, and had for several years instructed him in the general principles of the art of war. Phull was a man of genius; nay, he had many of the qualities of a great general. Along with Scharnhorst and Massenbach, he had been chief of the staff in Prussia in 1806; and he bore with him, from his wasted and conquered country, as profound a feeling of hatred to France as either of those ardent spirits. He had thoroughly studied the theory of war, and, in the seclusion of a contemplative life, had imbibed a clear sense of its great principles. But he was ignorant of men, and wholly unskilled in the intrigues of a court. Constantly living with the departed great, he was not an adequate match for the existing little; familiar with Cæsar and Frederick, he knew little of the mode of managing public affairs or ruling mankind in real life. Hence he was unfit for any practical command, and held none; but nevertheless his forcible genius, romantic turn of mind, and noble disinterestedness, gave him a great sway with the Emperor, and rendered him the author of the plan, and in the outset the real commander-in-chief, of the campaign.²

BARCLAY DE TOLLY, the war-minister who conducted

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¹ Segur, i.
147. Bout.
155, 164. La
Baume, 32.
Chamb. i.
177, 183.

5.

Direction of
the Russian
army at this
period under
Von Phull.

² Clausewitz,
5, 9.

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1812.

6.

Birth and
early history
of Barclay de
Tolly.

the retreat from the camp at Drissa to Borodino, was one of the greatest generals and noblest characters which Russia ever produced. Descended from an old Scottish family, the Barclays of Towie in Aberdeenshire,* a younger branch of which had migrated to Livonia, he was the son of a rural clergyman, and was born in that province in 1755. He entered the army at the early age of twelve in 1767, and without the aid either of family connexions, court influence, or turn for intrigue, succeeded by the mere force of his mind, extent of his acquirements, and perseverance of his character, in raising himself rapidly in the service, and at length attaining the very highest rank. He was already a colonel in 1798, after thirty-one years of service, having in the course of that time served with distinction in the wars both against the Turks, the Swedes, and the Poles. His promotion after that was rapid, and he was constantly engaged in important operations. In particular, in the Polish war of 1807, he was distinguished alike for his skill at Pultusk and the heroic defence of the village of Eylau;¹ while the masculine intrepidity of his mind appeared in the daring project of crossing, with a considerable army, the gulf of Bothnia on the ice—a romantic exploit, which he accomplished in 1809 with perfect success. It contributed much to awaken that high admiration of his abilities in the Emperor, which ultimately placed him in the supreme command of the army destined to contend with Napoleon.²

¹ *Ante*, c.
xliv. § 61.

² Biog. Univ.
lvii. 147. Sup.
Barclay de
Tolly.

7.

His character,
and parallel
with
Wellington.

Barclay was, beyond all question, one of the great generals which the era of the French Revolution produced, and certainly the greatest, after Suwarroff, of whom Russia can boast. He bears a closer resemblance than any other of the continental captains to Wellington: for in him the same daring was combined with the same caution; the same just conception with the same sagacious execution; the same singleness of heart with the same disinterestedness of character. We could hardly

* The ancient seat of that family, an old tower shrouded in stately trees, is to be seen close by the high road leading from Aberdeen to Inverness, between Fyvie and Turriff. The Barclays of Towie were a very old Scottish family. So early as the year 1500, Patrick Gordon of Craig, who was killed at the battle of Flodden in 1513, married Rachel, daughter of Barclay de Towie, who bore him five sons. A second intermarriage between the families of Craig and Barclay took place in 1607. For this family information I am indebted to my esteemed friend, James Gordon of Craig, in Aberdeenshire, who has the family documents in his possession.

recognise the dauntless hero who vanquished Sweden by marching across the Gulf of Bothnia, accompanied by heavy trains of cavalry and artillery, in the depth of winter, in the consummate general who saved Russia by his immortal retreat before Napoleon in 1812, did we not perceive the same diversity in Wellington, striking with seemingly rash but really wise daring at Assaye, and restraining the uplifted arm of retribution at Torres Vedras. He had not so much native genius as the English general, but more acquired information; success in him was not the free gift of rapid intuition, but the deserved reward of laborious study. On the field of battle his coup-de-œil was just, his valour calm, his firmness unconquerable. But patriotism was his great virtue; his sense of duty was such as nothing could shake. Jealousy of the command of a foreigner by descent deprived him, against the Emperor's wish, of the supreme command before the battle of Borodino, but he did not the less continue with ardent zeal to serve his country in a subordinate situation, till the taking of Paris. Envy and malice continued to heap injuries upon him, as they so often do on real greatness, down to the day of his death; but he replied to them only by renewed services in whatever station he was placed by the Emperor, though they preyed so severely upon his heart as at length to accelerate his approach to the grave.¹

¹ Biog. Univ.
lvii. 152, 153.
Barclay.

Unlike his noble rival in glory, Prince PETER BAGRATION had all the advantages of rank and descent. Born in 1765, he was descended from the ancient princes of Georgia, and entered the Russian army as a sergeant in 1782, after his country had been irrevocably united by Catherine to the dominions of the Czar. He was engaged in the terrible assault of Ockzakoff in 1788, and bore a distinguished part in the war of 1794 under Suwarroff in Poland. Such was the zeal and energy which he showed in the command of a body of cavalry in that campaign, that Suwarroff called him "his right arm," and gave him an important appointment in Italy in 1799, where he directed the corps which gained such valuable successes against Serrurier, and at the passage of the Adda. He afterwards superintended the movements of the army, under Suwarroff, at the battle of the Trebbia, and was felt to be an officer of so much ability by that great

8.
Early history
of Bagra-
thion.

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1812.

commander, that he was almost constantly employed by him as the "general of the day," instead of devolving that duty on the other generals in rotation. Subsequently he nobly combated at Hollabrunn, during the campaign of Austerlitz, with the Russian rearguard, against the greatly superior forces of Soult and Murat, and afterwards bore a distinguished part in the battles of Eylau, Heilsberg, and Friedland, in the conquest of Finland and the war in Moldavia, which followed the peace of Tilsit.¹

¹ Biog. Univ.
lvi. 59, 61.
Bagrathion.

9.
His character.

A general trained in such a school was eminently qualified to command one of the principal armies of Russia during the French invasion. He did not possess the scientific knowledge or methodical habits which rendered Barclay so great a commander; his character and disposition led him to a different career. He was not the Fabius but the Marcellus of the war—not the shield but the sword of the empire. His love of the excitement of danger was so strong, his disposition so impetuous, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could be restrained, whenever the firing began, from hurrying to the outposts, and sharing in the duties of a common lancer or grenadier. At the battle of Borodino, after having received a severe wound, he was obliged to dismount; but he refused to leave the field, and, seating himself on an eminence in the midst of the fire, on the edge of an intrenchment which the French were assaulting with distinguished valour, exclaimed in admiration of their courage, "Bravo, Français! bravo!" It may easily be believed that an officer endowed with so heroic a temperament was idolised by the soldiers, whom he was ever ready to lead to the cannon's mouth, and his untimely end on the field of Borodino was mourned by the whole army as if they had lost a parent or a brother.²

² Biog. Univ.
lvii. 61, 62.
Bagrathion.

10.
Napoleon enters Wilna, and remains there seventeen days.
June 28.

Barclay, with the principal Russian army, left Wilna on the 28th of June, and on the same day Napoleon entered it. He remained there for seventeen days; a delay which military historians have pronounced the greatest fault in his whole life. It is certain that it gave time to the Russian commanders to retire in admirable order, and exhibits a striking contrast to the rapidity with which he pursued his broken enemy after the battle of Jena, or the combats of Ratisbon and Echmuhl.

Already the extraordinary consumption of human life in the campaign had become apparent; for as the Emperor reviewed the troops at Wilna, they were almost struck down by the pestilential smell which the westerly wind blew from the long line of carcasses of horses and bodies of men which lay unburied on the road from Kowno.¹ But on the other hand, it is to be recollected that Lithuania afforded none of the resources for a victorious army which the opulent, and cultivated plains of Saxony or Bavaria presented. Vast forests of pine, or desert heaths and sands, offered no resources for the troops. Contrary to what obtains in the old civilised states of western Europe, the vicinity of the highways was hardly more peopled or better cultivated than the unfrequented districts; and if the army outstripped the convoys which accompanied it, the soldiers would have perished of want, or the military array been dissolved by the necessity of separating for the purpose of marauding and pillage. The unparalleled magnitude of his present forces necessarily impeded the Emperor's movements; and he felt that if he advanced, without due precaution, into so sterile a region, he ran the risk of perishing, like Darius, from the multitude of mouths which he had to feed.²

The ancient and unforgotten patriotism of the Poles burst forth without control for some days after the occupation of Wilna. Napoleon entered that city at the head of the Polish regiment commanded by Prince Radzivil, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, who regarded him as their liberator. The national banners were raised amid the sounds of military music and the acclamations of multitudes; the young embraced and wept in the public streets; the aged brought forth the ancient Polish dress, which had almost been forgotten during the days of their humiliation. The Diet of Warsaw declared the kingdom of Poland re-established, convoked the national diets, invited all the Poles to unite together, and called upon those in the Russian service to abandon their standards. The Emperor took some steps at first, calculated to favour the hope that a national restoration was in contemplation. The few days given at Wilna to the repose of the army, were devoted to the organisation of a provisional government extending over

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1812.

¹ Dumas,
Souv. iii. 423.² Bout. i, 172.
Jom. iv. 72.
Chamb. i.
187.11.
Enthusiasm
of the Poles
on that event.

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1812.

¹ Segur, i.
153, 154, 158.
Oginski, iv.
5. Fain, i.
181, 183.

12.
Address of
the Polish
Diet to the
Emperor.

all Lithuania. The country was divided into four governments; and prefects, mayors, and assistants, were elected as in the French empire. Six regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry, were directed to be raised, one of which formed part of Napoleon's Guard; and the constant presence of Maret, his minister for foreign affairs, whose anxiety for the restoration of Poland was so well known, in all his diplomatic labours, inspired the general hope that some decisive measure for the reversal of the great act of injustice under which it had suffered was in contemplation. The enthusiasm being universal, the men raised were very numerous. Altogether, the Poles furnished to Napoleon, in the course of the campaign, no less than eighty-five thousand men.¹

The first address of the Polish Diet to the Emperor was signally characteristic of the profound feelings of undeserved injury by which that gallant nation were animated. —“Why have we been effaced from the map of Europe? By what right have we been attacked, invaded, dismembered? What have been our crimes, who our judges? Russia is the author of all our woes. Need we refer to that execrable day when, in the midst of the shouts of a ferocious conqueror, Warsaw heard the last groans of the population of Praga, which perished entire by fire or sword? These are the titles of Russia to Poland; force has forged them, force can alone burst their fetters. Frontiers traced by a spoliating hand can never extinguish our common origin, or destroy our common rights. Yes! we are still Poles! The day of our restoration has arrived: the land of the Jagellons and the Sobieskis is to resume all its glory.” The clergy were next admonished to solicit the Divine protection; and an address was published to the Lithuanians in the Russian army, calling upon them to range themselves under the banners of their country. But though Napoleon was not insensible to the advantages which the co-operation of the Lithuanians offered him, yet political considerations of insurmountable weight prevented him from taking that decisive step in favour of the restoration of Poland, by which alone its independence, in the midst of so many powerful neighbours, could be effected; viz. the reunion of all its partitioned provinces under one head.² He was well aware of

² Chamb. i.
195. Fain, i.
181.

the ardent but unsteady and factious character of the Poles, and deemed the aid of their tumultuous democracy dearly purchased, if the friendship of Austria or Prussia, his present firm allies, were endangered in its acquisition.

He replied, therefore, to the address of the Polish Diet, —“ I approve of your efforts, and authorise you to continue them. I will do all in my power to second your resolutions. If you are unanimous, you may indulge the hope of compelling the enemy to recognise your rights ; but in these remote and widely-extended countries, it is solely in the unanimity of the efforts of the population that you can find hopes of establishing it. Let Lithuania, Samogitia, Volhynia, Podolia, and the Ukraine, be animated by the same spirit which I have witnessed in the Grand-duchy of Warsaw, and Providence will crown your efforts with success. I must at the same time inform you, that I have guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian dominions, and *can sanction no movement which may endanger the peaceable possession of her Polish provinces.*” These words froze every heart with horror. It was evident that he was willing enough to disturb Russia by a revolt in her Lithuanian dominions, but had no inclination to embroil himself with Austria or Prussia by a general reunion of the Polish provinces ; and without that, it was universally felt the restoration of the kingdom would prove an illusory dream. The provincial government which he had established did not possess the confidence of the nation ; no guarantee for the restoration of the monarchy was given ; distrust and dissatisfaction succeeded to the transports of inconsiderate joy ; and Napoleon, by yielding to the dictates of a cautious policy, lost the support of a gallant people.¹

While Napoleon, with the main body of his army, moved upon Wilna, Jerome and Davoust advanced against Bagrathion, who was forced to fall back by an eccentric line of retreat towards Bobruisk. The rapidity of the advance of the French centre cut off the communication between the two Russian armies ; and by pushing back Barclay five days before the position of Bagrathion was disturbed, he hoped to repeat the oblique attack on a great scale which had proved so fatal to the Austrians at Lissa. Bagrathion, in consequence, retired : but finding

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1812.

13.
His views on
the subject,
and reply.

¹ Segur, i.
153, 158.
Oginski, iii.
274. Chambr.
i, 195, 196.
Fain, i. 183,
185.

14.
Movements
of Jerome
against Ba-
grathion.

CHAP.
LXXII.

1812.

July 9.

July 10.

¹ Bout. i. 190,
228. Jomini,
iv. 66.
Chamb. i.
199, 200.
Fain, i. 208,
213, 216.

that his advanced posts, in consequence of the oblique advance of the French centre, encountered the corps of Davoust, whom Napoleon had detached from the Grand Army to prevent his rejoining the Russian centre, he was obliged to make several detours; and in the course of one of these, his cavalry, consisting chiefly of Cossacks, encountered at Mir the advanced guard of Jerome's army, composed of three regiments of Polish cavalry. A sharp action ensued, which ended favourably to the Russians; and the day following a still more serious combat took place between six Polish regiments and the Cossack cavalry, which also terminated in the repulse of the invaders. These brilliant affairs, which were the first engagements of the campaign, produced the utmost enthusiasm in the Russian army; but Bagrathion, wisely judging that even a total defeat of Jerome's army, by drawing him farther from the interior, would only enable Davoust to interpose between his army and the retiring columns of Barclay, continued his retreat, and reached in safety the ramparts of Bobruisk on the Berezina, on the 18th July.¹

15.
Their ill suc-
cess, and
consequent
displeasure of
Napoleon.
Combat of
Mohilow.

July 8.

The object of Napoleon in these movements was to separate entirely Bagrathion from Barclay de Tolly, and enclose the former between Jerome's army, which pressed his rear, and Davoust's corps, which was destined to fall perpendicularly on his flank, or occupy the termination of the roads by which he was retiring, or might seek to regain by cross-roads the intrenched camp of Drissa, where the whole army was ordered to rendezvous. But the rapidity and skill of the Russian movements, joined to the inexplicable tardiness of Jerome's pursuit, having rendered this well-conceived design abortive, the Emperor deprived his brother, with bitter reproaches, of his command, and placed the corps of Junot and Poniatowski under the orders of Davoust.* This change did not

* "I am extremely displeased at the King of Westphalia (Jerome) for not having sent his light troops in pursuit of the enemy under Bagrathion. It is impossible to manoeuvre worse than he has done. Had Poniatowski only a single division, he should have been sent forward on that duty; whereas, in fact, he had his whole corps. By thus forgetting all rules, as well as his express instructions, Bagrathion has gained time to make his retreat with, perfect leisure. The whole fruit of my manoeuvres, and the finest opportunity of the war, has been lost by his singular forgetfulness of the first principles of the military art."—FAIN, i. 230.

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LX XII.
1812.

improve the success of the movements for the capture of Bagrathion. That general reached Minsk on the 8th, and on the 12th resumed his march for Witepsk. Both armies advanced with expedition to occupy Mohilow, which commanded the entrance of the defiles by which the cross movement towards Barclay was to be effected ; but in spite of the utmost diligence of the Russians, they found it already in the hands of Davoust, who defended its approaches with thirty thousand men, and had adopted every imaginable precaution to secure it from attack. On the 23d July, Bagrathion pushed forward General Raeffskoi July 23. with twenty thousand men to attack the French position, which was extremely strong, in the defiles of a forest which was filled with artillery and tirailleurs. An obstinate conflict ensued, in which the Russians displayed their characteristic intrepidity in sustaining unmoved for hours, at the entrance of the ravine, the most terrible fire of musketry and grape-shot ; but being unable to force the French from their strong ground, Bagrathion wisely commenced a retreat, which was conducted in admirable order, and with little molestation. The loss on both sides was nearly equal, consisting of somewhat above three thousand men on the Russian, and three thousand two hundred on the French part.

¹ Jom. iv. 76,
77. Bout. i.
236, 237.
Chamb. i.
273, 279.

The junction of Count Platoff * with a large body of Cossacks of the Don, having raised Bagrathion's army on

* Platoff, headman or "hetman" of the Cossacks of the Don, and who bore a distinguished part in almost every battle from the opening of the war on the Niemen to its termination at Paris, was born on the banks of the Don in the year 1763, so that, at the commencement of the war of 1812, he was nearly fifty years of age. He early entered into the army, and commanded the Cossacks in the bloody Polish campaigns of 1806-7, and in the subsequent campaigns against the Turks in 1809-10. Though by this time arrived at the period of life when the activity of youth has generally cooled down into the more sober caution of age, yet he retained undiminished the activity and fire of his earlier years ; and he was always ready, at any hour of the day or night, to set out with his indefatigable Cossacks, and either march any distance in pursuit of the enemy, or engage in any attack, how hazardous soever, upon their forces. Enduring of fatigue, hardy in habit, unaccustomed to luxury, he slept with equal ease on the damp ground or the snow, covered with his cloak, and with his saddle for his pillow, as on a bed of down, and in the palaces of princes. The activity which his example communicated to the hardy children of the desert was such, that in course of the campaign they became the most formidable enemies of the French, and did the invading army more mischief than the *élite* of the Russian Guard. Platoff had a commanding figure, being six feet four inches in height ; he was distinguished by a benevolent expression of countenance, and possessed all the affability of manner and joviality of disposition which endears a chief to rude nations. He took little pains to prevent his followers from plundering, and they accordingly carried off, without mercy, whatever they could stuff under their saddles ; but deeds of unnecessary cruelty always

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16.

Bagrathion
effects his
retreat to
Smolensko.

the following day to fifty-five thousand men, he might, without difficulty, have forced Davoust from his position, and continued his movement by Mohilow, as Davoust had not more than thirty-four thousand to oppose him. But the favourable position of the French army, which communicated by an interior line with the centre under Napoleon, rendering that a hazardous operation, he prudently retired to Novo-Bichow, from whence he crossed the Borysthènes, and leisurely advanced by Mestilau to Smolensko, where, as will hereafter appear, he joined the main army under Barclay on the 3d August. Davoust, intimidated by the severity of the combat at Mohilow, did not venture to follow his rival across that deep and marshy river; and thus the whole measures of the French for the separation or capture of Bagrathion's forces, though conducted by two armies, each of which was as numerous as his own, ultimately proved abortive.¹

1 Jom. iv.
76, 77.
Bout. i. 238,
239.

17.

Retreat of the
Russian main
army to the
intrenched
camp at
Drissa, and
description of
it.
July 9.

Meanwhile, the main Russian army, after leaving Wilna under Barclay, retired to the intrenched camp of Drissa, on the river Dwina. The Emperor on the 8th July, being the anniversary of the battle of Pultowa, published an energetic address to his soldiers, who were somewhat discouraged by their long retreat before the enemy.* This camp, intrenched with the utmost care, and capable of containing a hundred thousand men, had been selected and fortified long before as a favourable position for covering the road to St Petersburg. It was defended by

2 Biog. Univ.
xxxv. 37, 38.
Platoff.

met with his reprobation, and, when detected, were severely punished. Such was his influence with his countrymen on the Don, that the whole men capable of bearing arms in the nation would have willingly turned out at his request; and it was very much owing to this cause, that the formidable reinforcement of two-and-twenty regiments of these nomad warriors joined the Russian army after the burning of Moscow, and made the scales of war, then hanging nearly even, turn decisively against the French Emperor. The author had the happiness of forming an acquaintance with this distinguished warrior at Paris in 1814, and many of the anecdotes of this and the succeeding campaign were received from him and his officers.²

* "Soldiers! When the enemy dared to cross our frontiers, we were so much scattered, that it was necessary to retire in order to effect the reunion of the troops. Now this is effected. The whole of the first army is here assembled: the field of battle is open to your valour;—so docile to rule, so ardent to maintain the reputation which your valour has acquired, you are about to gain laurels worthy of yourselves and of your ancestors. The remembrance of your valour, the éclat of your renown, engage you to surpass yourselves by the glory of your actions. The foes of your country have already experienced the weight of your arms. Go on, then, in the spirit of your fathers, and destroy the enemy who has dared to attack your religion and national honour even in your homes, in the midst of your wives and children. God, who is the witness of the justice of our cause, will sanctify your arms by his divine benediction."—CHAMBRAY, i. 215.

ten redoubts and three hundred and fifty-four pieces of cannon. Although the camp at Drissa has not attained such celebrity as the vast labour exerted on it might have led one to anticipate, yet it was one of the greatest military constructions of modern times. The Russians had been labouring at it assiduously for above two years, in the firm belief that, from its situation, it would, if held by a large army, render the advance of any hostile army either towards St Petersburg or Moscow impossible, and that itself, by art, might be rendered impregnable. The outer circle of the works was formed of a line of embrasures for musketry. Fifty paces behind them was a line of field-works alternately open and close : the former being intended for the batteries, the latter for single battalions stationed under cover of the batteries. Two hundred paces behind this line of works was an interior range, entirely shut in, and bristling with cannon ; in the centre was a still stronger intrenchment, intended either to serve as a refuge in case of disaster or a support in the event of retreat. Though this fortification was evidently complicated and artificial, yet it was strong ; and as it was mounted with four hundred pieces of cannon, and defended by so resolute a body of men as the Russian army, it may be doubted whether by any direct attack, even with his gigantic forces, Napoleon could have forced it. But the ground was sandy ; no devices for strengthening the external works by palisades, felled trees, &c., had been resorted to ; of the seven bridges destined for the retreat of the army in rear, not one had yet been constructed ; and, above all, the whole camp was liable to be turned by the right bank of the Dwina, where there was no fortress whatever. The little town of Drissa, also, which lay opposite the left wing, was destitute of any support ; and the long wooden sheds, in which enormous quantities of provisions, chiefly flour, had been accumulated, were without cover, and liable to be easily set on fire by a shower of howitzers. It was these defects which caused the camp ultimately to be abandoned without any contest, after immense sums had been employed in its construction.¹

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1812.

July 8.

¹ Clausewitz,
Feldzug von
1812, 22, 23.

But, strong as this intrenched camp was, it became useless, and even perilous, when Napoleon, moving the

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1812.

18.
Barclay evacuated it and retires to Witepsk.

July 14.

¹ Bout. i. 180,
198, 199.
Chamb. i.
213, 217.
Fain, i. 274,
275.

19.
Napoleon advances to the Dwina.

mass of his forces towards his right, threatened not only to advance in the direction of Moscow, but to throw the Russian army towards Livonia and the sea, and sever it from its communication with the heart of the empire. To avoid such a catastrophe, and at the same time facilitate the long wished-for junction with Bagrathion, who, since his repulse at Mohilow, had been driven to the circuitous route of Borissow and Liady, with a view to join Barclay at Witepsk or Smolensko, the general-in-chief resolved to evacuate this stronghold, and retire by the right bank of the Dwina to Witepsk. On the 14th July, Barclay broke up from his intrenchments; and on the 16th, the headquarters were established at Polotsk, where the Emperor quitted the army and hastened to Moscow, to stimulate by his presence the patriotic efforts of that important capital, which was evidently about to become the principal object of the efforts of the enemy. He left the chief command in the hands of Barclay de Tolly, who, though admirably qualified for the duty, received little cordial support from the native Russian generals under his orders.¹

On the 16th July Napoleon moved from Wilna, and advanced with nearly two hundred thousand men towards the camp at Drissa. Finding it evacuated at his approach, he halted for six days at Gloubokoi; and on the 22d continued his movement towards Witepsk, and reached the Dwina on the 24th at Bechenchowiczi. Barclay, perceiving that he was throwing the mass of his forces on the right towards Witepsk, resolved to anticipate him in his march to that place, in order to preserve his own communication with Smolensko, where he expected to effect his junction with Bagrathion. In consequence, the Russian headquarters were advanced with great rapidity to Witepsk on the 23d, and a large part of the army was crossed over to the left bank of the stream—a perilous operation, which exposed the troops to the dangers which had been so severely experienced, when a similar movement was made to the left of the Niemen in presence of the enemy at Friedland. The delay of Napoleon at Gloubokoi, however, preserved the Russian army from a similar disaster.² His advanced posts did not reach Ostrowno till the 25th, by which time Barclay had

² Chamb. i.
221, 225.
Fain, i. 273.
Segur, i. 194.
Bout. i. 211,
214.

assembled all his forces, eighty thousand strong, in the neighbourhood of Witepsk ; and the vanguard, consisting of twelve thousand men, was strongly posted under Ostermann on the wooded heights which adjoin the former town.

No movement in the campaign was of more vital importance to the Russians than this advance upon Witepsk ; and if Napoleon had not delayed six days, apparently without a cause, at Gloubokoi, he could with ease have anticipated the enemy at that important point ; permanently interposed the bulk of his forces between Barclay and Bagrathion ; and, throwing back the former towards St Petersburg, and the latter on Smolensko and Moscow, have cut off the former from the southern provinces and principal resources of the empire. With such precision had the orders of Napoleon been obeyed, that the whole corps of the army which he commanded in person reached the rendezvous on the Dwina at the same hour, though their march had begun a hundred leagues in the rear from the banks of the Niemen. The assemblage of one hundred and eighty thousand men at the same point, produced for some time inevitable confusion ; but by degrees the different corps defiled to the separate posts assigned to them ; and before midnight silence reigned in the midst of that innumerable army.¹

On the 25th and 26th, Murat, at the head of ten thousand horse and two thousand light troops, the advanced guard of the French, attacked Count Ostermann near Ostrowno, and several severe actions ensued, in the course of which he charged in person at the head of the Polish lancers. The Russian infantry, strongly posted in the thick woods with which the country abounded, arrested by a heavy fire the advance of the French cavalry ; and many charges were made on both sides with various success, and without any decisive effect. During the delay occasioned by these actions, both parties brought up the main body of their forces ; and on the morning of the 27th, the whole Russian army, eighty-two thousand strong, was to be seen posted on an elevated plain which covered the approaches to Witepsk. Their superb cavalry, amounting to above ten thousand horsemen, were stationed in double lines in front of the

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20.

Vast importance of this movement on Witepsk ; and arrival of Napoleon in front of it.

¹ Bont. i. 211, 215.
Jom. iv. 72, 73. Fain, i. 273. Segur, i. 194, 195. Chamb. i. 221, 227.

21.

Position of the Russians, and force which Barclay had collected there. July 26.

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right of the position ; the infantry in the centre, behind the deep bed of the Leizipa ; and a magnificent array of artillery occupied the left on a series of wooded eminences. Napoleon, at the head of a hundred and eighty thousand men, made every preparation for an attack on the following day. Several severe skirmishes between the advanced guards, in presence of their respective armies, fought with alternate success, elevated the hopes of the contending parties ; and the soldiers on both sides sharpened their weapons, and prepared for a mortal struggle on the following day. Napoleon's last words to Murat at night-fall were, " To-morrow at five, the sun of Austerlitz ! " ¹

Segur, i.
200, 204, 205.
Bout. i. 218,
220. Fain, i.
279, 282.
Chamb. i.
229, 231.

22.
Intelligence
from Bagra-
thion induces
him to retreat
to Smolensko.
Admirable
order of the
retreat.

In truth, the Russian general, notwithstanding the vast disproportion of numbers, had taken the bold resolution of giving battle on the following day, in order to avoid the danger of being attacked by the French while defiling by a flank movement in the direction of Orcha, where he had appointed Bagrathion to meet him. But during the night intelligence was received, which fortunately induced him to change his determination. It appeared, from letters brought by one of his aides-de-camp, that Bagrathion having been arrested by Davoust at Mohilow, and being unable, in consequence, to continue his march to Orcha, had crossed the Dnieper, and was moving towards Smolensko. Barclay immediately resolved to discontinue his intended flank movement towards Orcha, and abandoning Witepsk, to effect his junction in the neighbourhood of that renowned bulwark of the Russian empire. Brilliant watch-fires were kept up in the Russian lines during the night, to induce the belief that they were resolved to give battle ; but meanwhile the whole army broke up from its encampment, and the important and perilous duty of protecting the rear was intrusted to Count Pahlen. Early on the morning of the 28th, Murat, who had bivouacked with the advanced posts, approached the enemy's station, but found their camp entirely deserted. With such skill had the retreat been conducted, that not a weapon, not a baggage-waggon, not a straggler, had been left behind.* ² Following on the

July 28.
² Segur, i.
209. Bout. i.
220, 224.
Fain, i. 286,
287. Chamb.
i. 237.

* " 'Twould seem as if their mother earth,
Had swallowed up her warlike birth."

traces of the enemy, the advanced guard was unable, at the separation of the two roads of St Petersburg and Moscow, to ascertain which their opponents had followed ! The French officers beheld with astonishment the science and discipline of their enemies, and were obliged to acknowledge with shame, that there was more order in the Russian retreating than in their own advancing columns.

The Viceroy at length discovered the Russian rearguard slowly retiring in admirable order over the plain towards Smolensko. Some charges executed against it by the French chasseurs were not only repulsed, but the assailants destroyed. The exhausted state of the horses rendered it impossible for the cavalry to act with effect, and the retreating riders could only save their attenuated steeds by leading them by the bridles, walking by their sides. The rays of a powerful sun overwhelmed the soldiers, and every thing conspired to indicate the necessity of repose. In truth, the losses of the army during their long march had been such, that a halt could no longer be dispensed with. Napoleon had accomplished the advance from Kowno and Grodno to Witepsk, without magazines or convoys, in little more than thirty days ; whereas Charles XII. had taken eight months to traverse the same space, with the whole stores of the army accompanying its columns. From the want of magazines, and the impossibility of conveying an adequate supply of provisions for so immense a host, disorders of every kind had accumulated in a frightful manner on the flanks and rear of the army. Neither bread nor spirits were to be had ; the flesh of overdriven animals and bad water constituted the sole subsistence of the soldiers ; the burning sun during the day, and cold dews at night, multiplied dysenteries to an extraordinary degree. Pillage was universal : the necessities of the soldiery burst through all the restraints of discipline ; and a crowd of stragglers and marauders on all sides, now swelled to above thirty thousand, both seriously diminished the strength and impaired the character of the army. Napoleon yielded to the necessities of his situation : the headquarters were established at Witepsk, and his numerous corps cantoned in the vicinity of the Dwina and the Borysthenes ;¹ while

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23.
Advance of
the French to
Witepsk, and
reasons for
their halt
there.

¹ Bout. i.
223, 225.
Segur, i. 210.
Chamb. i.
241, 243.

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the Russian army, no longer molested in its retreat, slowly retired to Smolensko, where Bagrathion was awaiting its approach.

24.

Immense
difficulty
experienced
in providing
subsistence
for the in-
vading army.

Already it had become apparent that a difficulty was to be encountered in this war, to which Napoleon in all his former invasions had been a stranger. Pillage and disorders are always the inseparable concomitants of the assemblage of large bodies of men, and were far from being unknown in his previous campaigns; but on these occasions they had been the accompaniment only of the advancing columns; order and discipline were soon established in the rear; and when the troops went into quarters and received their rations regularly, they were maintained with almost as little difficulty as in their own country. But in the Russian war, when disorders once commenced, they never ceased; and, whatever discipline the Emperor established in the immediate vicinity of his own headquarters, the whole lines of communication in the rear were filled with stragglers, and presented a scene of pillage, confusion, and suffering. Napoleon was perfectly aware of the existence of these disorders; and was not only severe in his censure to his lieutenants for permitting their existence, but indefatigable in his own efforts to arrest them. Yet it was all in vain: the evil went on continually increasing to the close of the campaign, and proved one great cause of the disasters in which it terminated. The reason was, that the expedition was conducted on a scale which exceeded the bounds of human strength, and had to combat with difficulties which were only augmented by the multitude who were assembled to ensure its success.¹

¹ Chamb. i.
244, 247.

See Napoleon
to Berthier,
July 10,
1812. Fain,
i. 243; and
Dumas'
Report,
Aug. 12,
1812.
Chambray, i.
376.

25.

Causes to
which it was
owing.

Russia differed essentially from all the countries, with the exception of Spain, in which the French had hitherto carried on war. It has neither the navigable rivers which in Germany, Italy, or the Low Countries, serve as so many arteries to distribute subsistence and resources through the mass of an army; nor the rich fields and far-spread ancient cultivation, which in their fertile plains so often had enabled the Emperor to dispense with the formation of magazines and the encumbrance of convoys, and plunge, regardless of his flanks and rear, into the heart of his adversary's territory. The roads in many places traverse

immense forests, where no human habitations are to be seen for leagues together; and often for a whole day's journey, a few wretched hamlets alone break the gloomy monotony of the wilderness. No distributions of provisions to the soldiers, no efforts made to procure convoys, could for weeks together furnish subsistence to several hundred thousand men and horses, while traversing such a country. It was from the very outset of the campaign, in consequence, found necessary to reduce the rations served out to the soldiers to one-half; and the pittance thus obtained was inadequate to the support of men undergoing the fatigue which their long marches imposed upon the troops.¹

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¹ Clausewitz,
16, 17.
Chamb. i.
246, 248.

Such as it was, however, it was in general denied to the detachments or convalescents coming up in the rear, who, finding the magazines emptied by the enormous multitude who had passed before them, were in general sent on without any thing, to find subsistence as they best could, in a country often desert, always wasted by the passage of the corps which were then on the march. Pillage, and the dispersion of the troops for several leagues on either side of the high-roads in quest of subsistence, became thus a matter of necessity; no order or discipline could prevent it. A large proportion of the stragglers who thus inundated the country never rejoined their colours, or were only collected in confused multitudes by the light columns organised by the Emperor to arrest the disorders; and before a great part of the army had ever seen the enemy, it had already undergone a loss greater than might have been expected in the most bloody campaign. It was weakened, when the stragglers and sick were added to the killed and wounded, by the enormous number of a hundred thousand men before they reached Witepsk.²

26.
Deplorable
condition of
the corps in
rear of the
army.

² Clausewitz,
16, 17.
Chamb. i.
246, 250.

While these movements were taking place in the armies, the Emperor Alexander hastened to Moscow, to accelerate by his presence the armaments in the interior of the empire. By an edict dated from the camp of Drissa, the 12th July, he had already ordered a new levy of one in one hundred in the provinces nearest to the seat of war; but this supply not being deemed sufficient, a proclamation, couched in the most energetic language, was addressed a few days afterwards from Polotsk to the

27.
The Emperor
Alexander
repairs to
Moscow, to
hasten the
armaments
there.
July 12.

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¹ Bout. i.
199, 201.

inhabitants of Moscow :—"Never," said he, "was danger more urgent. The national religion, the throne, the state, can be preserved only by the greatest sacrifices. May the hearts of our illustrious nobles and people be filled with the spirit of true valour; and may God bless the righteous cause! May this holy spirit, emanating from Moscow, spread to the extremities of the empire! May the destruction with which we are menaced recoil upon the head of the invader, and *may Europe, freed from the yoke of servitude, have cause to bless the name of Russia!*"¹

28.
Proclamation
to the nation.

A similar address was on the 18th published to the whole Russian people :—"The enemy has crossed our frontiers and penetrated into the interior of Russia. Unable by treachery to overturn an empire which has grown with the growth of ages, he now endeavours to overturn it with the accumulated forces of Europe. Perfidy in his heart, honour on his lips, he seeks to seduce the credulous ears, and enchain the manly arms; and if the captive hardly perceives at first his chains under the flowers in which they are hid, tyranny ere long discloses itself in all its odious colours. But Russia has penetrated his views! The path of duty lies before her; she has invoked the protection of the Most High. She opposes to the machinations of the enemy an army undaunted in courage, which burns with the desire to chase the enemy from its country; to destroy those locusts who appear to overload the earth, but whom the earth will reject from its bosom, and deny even the rites of sepulture. We demand forces proportioned to such an object; and that object is, the destruction of a tyrant who oppresses the universe. Great as is the valour of our troops, they have need of reinforcements in the interior to sustain their efforts. We have called on our ancient metropolis of Moscow to give the first example of this heroic devotion. We address the same appeal to all our subjects in Europe or Asia, and to all communities and religions. We invite all classes to a general armament, in order to co-operate with ourselves against the designs of the enemy. Let him find at every step the faithful sons of Russia ready to combat all his forces, and deaf to all his seductions; despising his fraud, trampling under foot his gold, paralysing by the heroism

of true valour all the efforts of his legions of slaves. In every noble may he find a Posankoi, in every ecclesiastic a Palistyn, in every citizen a Menin.* Illustrious nobles! in every age you have been the saviours of your country; holy clergy! by your prayers you have always invoked the Divine blessing on the arms of Russia; people! worthy descendants of the brave Selavonians, often have you broken the jaws of the lions which were open to devour you! Unite then, with the cross in your hearts and the sword in your hands, and no human power shall prevail against you.”¹

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While the minds of all ranks were in the highest state of excitement from these proclamations, and a sense of the crisis which awaited their country, the Emperor arrived in Moscow from the army. On the 27th July the nobles and the merchants were invited to a solemn assembly at the imperial palace. Count Rostopchin, the governor of Moscow, then read the Emperor's address, and invited all the nobles to contribute to the defence of their country. A levy of ten in one hundred of the male population was immediately proposed and *unanimously* adopted; and they further agreed to clothe and arm them at their own expense. It was calculated that if the other parts of the empire followed this example, which they immediately did, it would produce five hundred thousand warriors. Nor did the assembly of merchants evince less zeal in the public service: a contribution proportioned to the capital of each was instantly agreed to; a voluntary additional subscription was further opened, and in less than an hour the sum subscribed exceeded £180,000. While all hearts were touched by these splendid efforts, the Emperor appeared in the assembly, and after openly explaining the dangers of the state, declared, amidst a transport of general enthusiasm, that he would exhaust his last resources before giving up the contest. “The disasters,” said he, “with which you are menaced, should be considered as the means necessary to complete the ruin of the enemy.” History affords few examples of so generous a confidence on the part of the sovereign, and such devoted patriotism on the part of his subjects. By these means a powerful

¹ Bout. i.
204. Chamb.
i. 370, 371.
Fain, i. 316,
317.

29.
Generous and
patriotic
devotion of
the inhabi-
tants of
Moscow.
July 27.

* Patriots celebrated in Russian history.

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Aug. 15.

¹ Fain, i. 313.
Guillaume
de Vaudon-
court, 106,
Bout. i. 205,
210.

auxiliary force was created in the interior, destined to fill up the chasm in the regular army. The example of Moscow was speedily followed by the other cities and provinces in the centre of the empire; and the patriotic levies thus formed, powerfully contributed to the final success of the campaign. Having taken these energetic measures, the Emperor set out for St Petersburg, where he arrived on the 15th August; and, by an edict published on the 16th, an additional levy was ordered in all the provinces not actually the seat of war.¹

30.
Opinion of
Napoleon on
these procla-
mations.

These proclamations, and some rumours of the extensive preparations going forward in the interior, speedily reached the French headquarters, where they excited no small astonishment. The religious strain of the addresses especially, and the repeated appeals to the protection of Heaven, were the subject of unbounded ridicule among the gay and thoughtless officers of the Grand Army. Not so, however, with Napoleon. He received with equal surprise, but very different feelings from those of contempt, the report of these energetic efforts to give a devotional character to the contest. Again and again he caused the proclamations, and the still more impassioned addresses of the metropolitan Archbishop of Moscow to the clergy of the empire, to be read to him; and long did he muse on their contents. "What," said he, "can have wrought such a change in the Emperor Alexander? Whence has sprung all this venom which he has infused into the quarrel? Now there is nothing but the force of arms which can terminate the contest: war alone can put a period to war. It was to avoid such a necessity that I was so careful, at the outset of the contest, not to implicate myself by any declarations in favour of the re-establishment of Poland; now I see my moderation was a fault."²

² Fain, i. 317,
318.

While the centre of the French army thus advanced to Witepsk, and Barclay retired to Smolensko, Count WITTGENSTEIN,* with twenty-five thousand men, was detached from the army of the latter, in order to retain

* Wittgenstein was at this period forty years of age, having been born in 1772. A German by birth, he had early entered the Russian service, and risen by his energy and perseverance to the high command which he now enjoyed. He was brave, active, and persevering; full of energy and indefatigable in his habits. No man exceeded him in patriotic spirit, or enthusiastic

a position upon the Dwina and cover the road to St Petersburg. Oudinot was opposed to him by Napoleon; and he occupied Polotsk with twenty-seven thousand excellent soldiers. On the 30th July he advanced against the Russian general, and a severe action ensued on the following day. The Russian vanguard, under Kutusoff, in the first instance imprudently crossed the Dwina, and was driven back with the loss of a thousand men: but the French under Verdier, hurried on by the eagerness of the pursuit, committed the same fault, and brought on a general action, in which the Russians, after a long and bloody struggle, were victorious. Oudinot, weakened by the loss of four thousand men, retired across the Dwina, and took shelter under the walls of Polotsk, where, as mentioned below, he was shortly after joined by St Cyr, at the head of twelve thousand Bavarians, which raised his army, notwithstanding its losses, to thirty-five thousand men.¹

Napoleon was no sooner informed of this check on the Dwina, than he gave vent to severe invectives against Oudinot, who, he insisted, was superior in force to the enemy, and, instead of awaiting an attack, should have taken the initiative, and assumed a victorious attitude towards the enemy. Stung to the quick by these reproaches, which he was conscious were by no means deserved, the brave marshal obeyed his orders and advanced against his antagonist; while the Emperor, who felt the full importance, during his advance into the interior, of preserving his left flank on the Dwina secure, ordered up St Cyr with his corps of Bavarians, who were estimated at twenty-two thousand men, but who had already wasted away to half that number, by forced marches to Polotsk; and he arrived there on the 6th August. Alexander, on his side, who was not less interested in the operations of a corps which at once covered the road to St Petersburg and menaced the communications of the French army, ordered up powerful reinforcements,² sixteen thousand strong, under Count

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31.

First operations of Count Wittgenstein on the Dwina, in which the French are defeated. July 31.

¹ Jom. iv. 80, 81. Bout. i. 201, 209. Fain, i. 297. Chamb. i. 265.

32.

Napoleon reproaches Oudinot, and orders up St Cyr.

Aug. 6.
² Chamb. i. 265, 267. Napoleon to Berthier, July 26, 1812. Ibid. i. 378. Jom. i. 80, 81. Fain, i. 297, 298. Segur, i. 242.

devotion to the service. Without the first qualities of a great general, at least when at the head of very large armies, he was admirably qualified for the subordinate part with which he was now intrusted, of covering St Petersburg, and compensating, by his obstinacy and perseverance in resisting the attacks of the French marshals, the decided superiority of their numbers.—See CLAUSEWITZ, 203.

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Steinheil, who had been stationed in Finland, but were now rendered disposable by the conclusion of the treaty with Sweden, to the same destination ; and the militia of St Petersburg also received orders to advance to his support. Thus every thing announced that the war on the Dwina would become of great, if not decisive importance, before the close of the campaign.

On the other flank, Tormasoff, finding that the Austrians under Schwartzberg were not advancing against

33.
Operations of
Tormasoff
against
Schwartz-
berg. Peace
between
Russians,
Turks, and
Swedes be-
comes known
to Napoleon.

him, fell suddenly on the corps of Saxons under Reynier, at Kobrin, and on the 23d July made prisoners an entire brigade of their best troops. It became indispensable, therefore, to support the Saxon corps by the Austrians under Schwartzberg ; and thus Napoleon lost the support of that auxiliary force, on which he had reckoned to supply the prodigious waste of human life in the cam-

paign. While the Emperor, too, lay inactive at Witepsk, he received two pieces of intelligence which had a material influence upon his ulterior views in the campaign. The

July 14.

first was the peace of Bucharest, concluded on July 14th between the Russians and the Turks, whereby a large part of their army on the Danube was rendered disposable : and the second, the discovery of the treaty, of

March 24.

the 24th March preceding, between the Swedes and the Emperor Alexander, which not only promised to set free the Russian army in Finland, but threatened his rear with a descent from the Swedish forces. Information at the same time was received of powerful reinforcements to the army of Tormasoff, which were approaching from the Danube, and of great additions to the corps of Wittgenstein, which might soon be expected from the army of observation in Finland. At the same period, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was signed between

¹ Jom. iv. 80,
82. Segur, i.
244. Fain, i.
291, 311.
Bout. ii. 75,
76.

Russia and England, by which a subsidy of £800,000 was provided to the former power ; and it was stipulated, that in the event of the French invasion endangering the Russian fleet, it would be removed, as a measure of security, to the British shores.¹

These important events, and the intelligence of the prodigious armaments preparing in the interior by the activity of the Emperor Alexander, and the patriotic efforts of his subjects, led to the most serious reflections

at Napoleon's headquarters. The expedience of a farther advance into the heart of the empire was discussed in his military council for some days. Several of his generals openly dissuaded him from the enterprise, as fraught with the greatest hazard; but after they had all delivered their opinions, the Emperor expressed his own as follows: "Why should we remain at Witepsk? The vicinity of the rivers, indeed, make it a defensible position in summer; but in winter what would avail their frozen streams? We must, therefore, construct every thing for ourselves: whereas at Moscow all is ready-made to our hands. A return to Wilna would be still more dangerous: it would necessarily lead to a retreat to the Vistula, and the loss of the whole of Lithuania. At Smolensko, again, we shall find at least a fortified town, and a position on the Dnieper. The example of Charles XII. is out of place: he did not fail because his enterprise was impracticable, but because he had not force sufficient to accomplish it. In war, fortune has an equal share with ability in success: if we wait for an entirely favourable train of circumstances, we shall never attempt any thing; to gain an object we must commence it. No blood has yet been shed: Russia is too powerful to yield without fighting: Alexander will not treat till a great battle has been fought. It is a mistake to suppose he is retiring from any premeditated design; his armies retreated from the Dwina to effect a junction with Bagrathion; from Witepsk, to unite with him at Smolensko.¹

"The hour of battle is arrived: you will not have Smolensko without a battle; you will not have Moscow without a battle. I cannot think of taking up my winter-quarters in the middle of July. Our troops are always in spirits when they advance: a prolonged and defensive position is not suited to the French genius. Are we accustomed to halt behind rivers? to remain cantoned in huts? to manœuvre in the same spot during eight months of privations? The line of defence of the Dwina or Borysthenes is illusory: let winter come with its snows, and where are your barriers? Why should we leave the fanatical people of the East time to empty their immense plains and fall upon us? Why should we remain here eight months, when twenty days are sufficient

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34.

Arguments
against any
farther ad-
vance at the
French head-
quarters, and
answer of
Napoleon.

¹ Segur, i.
224. Fain, i.
321, 322.

35.

Napoleon's
answer con-
cluded.

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to accomplish our purpose? Let us anticipate winter and its reflections. We must strike soon and strongly, or we shall be in danger. We must be in Moscow in a month, or we shall never be there. Peace awaits us under its walls. Should Alexander still persist, I will treat with his nobles: Moscow hates St Petersburg; the effects of that jealousy are incalculable."—With such arguments did Napoleon justify his resolution to advance into the interior of the empire; but, in truth, the campaigns of Echemuhl and Jena had spoiled him for the delays of ordinary war, or the precautions requisite between equal combatants. His career seemed blasted, unless he stepped from victory to victory; and even the dangers of a Russian winter were preferable, in his estimation, to the insupportable tedium of a lengthened residence at Witepsk.¹

¹ Segur, i.
224. Fain, i.
321, 324.

36.
Reflections
on this deter-
mination.

In truth, the result is not always a proof of the wisdom either of military or political measures, because many things enter into its composition which cannot be foreseen by the greatest sagacity: a due appreciation of all the considerations which present themselves at the moment, is the utmost that can be effected by human ability. Before we condemn Napoleon's advance to Moscow as imprudent, we should recollect that similar temerity had, in all his former wars, been crowned with success; that the experience he had had of Russian firmness at Austerlitz and Friedland, afforded no ground for supposing that the Emperor would resist the force of circumstances which had more than once constrained the pride of Austria and Prussia to submit; that a throne raised by the sword would be endangered by the least pause even in the career of success which had established it; that the peace with Turkey and Sweden would shortly expose his flanks to attack from forces which could not as yet be brought into the field; and that the fact of his actually entering Moscow with a victorious army demonstrates that he possessed the means of reducing the Russians to that extremity, in which, according to all former experience, he might expect a glorious peace. These considerations, while they tend to exculpate Napoleon from blame in the important step which he now took, enhance to the highest degree the glory of the Emperor and people of

Russia, by showing that the success which ultimately crowned their efforts, was owing to a degree of firmness in adversity which was deemed beyond the bounds of human fortitude.

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By a singular coincidence, at the very moment that Napoleon was thus adopting the resolution to advance into the interior of Russia, a similar resolution to resume the offensive had been taken at the Russian headquarters. Many causes had contributed to produce this result. The long-continued retreat, which had now extended to three hundred miles, had both depressed the spirits and excited the indignation of the soldiers, who, ignorant of the vast superiority of force with which they were threatened, murmured loudly at thus abandoning so considerable a portion of the empire without a struggle. The great losses sustained by the French during their advance, amounting to a hundred thousand men, were perfectly known at the Russian headquarters. Schouvaloff, who had been sent from Swanziani to Napoleon's headquarters on a political mission, had returned in perfect astonishment at the multitude of carcasses of men and horses which strewed the roads, and the swarms of sick and stragglers which crowded the villages. On the other hand, their own loss during the retreat had not hitherto exceeded ten thousand men, and twenty guns abandoned in the mud. They had now a united army in the centre of a hundred and twenty thousand men, and two wings of thirty thousand each, under Wittgenstein and Tormasoff, supported by the fortresses of Riga and Bobruisk, to operate on its flank. The Russians had been greatly deceived as to the strength of the French army which had hitherto crossed the Niemen; they reckoned it at three hundred and fifty thousand, whereas in truth it was four hundred and seventy thousand. Judging by this standard, they conceived they had not more than one hundred and fifty thousand in front of Barclay, and this did not appear so great a superiority as to justify, against the opinion of the army, a farther continuance of the retreat. In fact, however, the enemy's army under the immediate command of Napoleon, was fully two hundred thousand strong, when the Viceroy and Junot, who were coming up, were taken into account.¹ After much anxious con-

37.

Simultaneous
resolution to
resume the
offensive
taken at the
Russian
headquarters.

¹ Clausewitz,
110, 114.
Bout. i. 247,
253. Chamb.
i. 292. Segur,
i. 246, 251.

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sideration on the part of the Russian generals, in the course of which Yermoloff and Toll, the chief staff-officers, strenuously urged that the retreat should be discontinued and a vigorous offensive commenced, it was determined to move forward, and strike a blow at Napoleon while his forces still lay dispersed in their cantonments.

The scattered position of the French army presented an opportunity for striking a blow with something approaching to equality of numbers,—an object of the utmost importance, as their vast amount, when all collected, was still too great to justify the risking of a general battle; and it was indispensable, by all means, to protract the war, in order to give time for the completion of the armaments in the interior. With this view, the Russians broke up early on the morning of August 7, and advanced in three great columns against the French quarters. The mass of their forces, one hundred and fourteen thousand strong, was directed towards Roudnia; while Platoff, with a chain of Cossacks, covered their movements. At Inkowo, this enterprising commander fell upon the advanced guard of Murat, under Sebastiani, consisting of six thousand horse and a regiment of light infantry, and defeated it with the loss of five hundred prisoners. This check roused the genius of Napoleon. He instantly despatched couriers in all directions to collect his corps, and assembled them in a body round his headquarters; and moved from Witepsk on the 13th August, in the direction of Smolensko. To repair the error which he had committed in leaving his forces so much dispersed, and giving the enemy the advantage of the initiative, he resolved to turn the left of the Russian army, and, by crossing the Dnieper, gain possession of Smolensko, and thus cut them off from the interior of the empire. With this view, on the 13th three bridges were thrown over the Dnieper, and two hundred thousand men suddenly assembled on the shores of that river. Amongst them the corps of Davoust seventy thousand strong, was particularly distinguished by the strength of its divisions, and the admirable state of its discipline and equipments. Napoleon passed in a day the woody and rugged ridge which separates the Dwina from the Dnieper, and beheld, with a transport of youthful enthusiasm,² that celebrated stream, known only to

38.

Barclay
advances
against the
right of the
French army,
and Napo-
leon advances
towards
Smolensko.

Aug. 7.

Aug. 8.

Aug. 13.

Aug. 15.

1 Fain, i.

354. Segur,

i. 252. Bout.

i. 253.

Chamb. i.

292.

the Romans by their defeats, and the course of which to the Black Sea awakened those dreams of Oriental ambition that from his earliest years had been floating in his mind.

The French army crossed the Dnieper at several fords in order of battle, with the Emperor in the centre on horseback, and at Liady entered the territories of Old Russia. Advancing forward, Marshals Ney and Murat, who headed the leading column of the army, overtook, near Krasnoi, General Newerofskoi, who with the rear-guard, consisting of six thousand foot and twelve hundred horse, was slowly retreating in the direction of Smolensko. This little corps, which had been detached by Barclay to the other side of the Dnieper, after he had moved with the remainder of his troops to the left, found itself assailed on all sides by eighteen thousand horse, without the possibility of obtaining assistance from its comrades, who were on the opposite side of the river. The head of the retreating column being overtaken and stopped by the light cavalry of the French, the horsemen who formed the advance were speedily driven into the ranks of the infantry; and the situation of the Russians was the more critical from the inexperienced nature of their troops, who were new levies that had never seen fire. Many generals in such circumstances would have deemed resistance impossible, and proposed a surrender; but Newerofskoi thought only of his duty. Instantly dividing his little army into two hollow squares, which were soon after united into one, he retired slowly and in admirable order over the immense open plains which adjoin the Dnieper, enveloped on all sides by innumerable squadrons, who charged them more than *forty times* during the day, and in some instances broke through the ramparts of bayonets, and cut down the Russian officers in the very centre of their squares. Nevertheless, they always formed again; and this little band of heroes, still forming a lesser square when the larger was broken or weakened by loss, steadily retired during the whole day, repulsing, by an incessant rolling fire, the repeated charges of the French cavalry, and at length, on the approach of night, reached Korytnia with unbroken ranks, though with the loss of eleven hundred men and five pieces of cannon.¹

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39.
Heroic action
of Newerof-
skoi near
Krasnoi.
Aug. 15.

¹ Bout. i.
255. Fain, i.
359. Segur, i.
260. Chamb.
i. 302, 303.

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40.

Both armies
approach
Smolensko.

Napoleon continued to press upon the retreating Russian columns; but on the following day Newerofskoi effected a junction with Raefskoi, and their united force being nineteen thousand men, they resolved to throw themselves into Smolensko, and there defend themselves to the last extremity, in order to afford time for the main body of the Russian army to advance to its succour. Barclay and Bagrathion, meanwhile, being apprised of the approach of the French towards that town, and the imminent danger of their columns on the other side of the river, retreated with the utmost expedition in that direction. At daybreak on the morning of the 16th, the main Russian army marched on Smolensko, where Raefskoi and Newerofskoi, with nineteen thousand men, were shut up in presence of the whole French army.¹

¹ Bout. i.
257. Segur,
i. 265, 266.

41.

Description
of that city.

The ancient and venerable city of Smolensko, containing twenty thousand inhabitants, is situated on two hills, which there restrain within a narrow channel the stream of the Dnieper. Two bridges secure the communication between the two divisions of the city and opposite sides of the river. An old wall, thirty-five feet high and eighteen feet thick, surmounted by thirty lofty towers, formed its principal protection. In front of this rampart was placed a dry ditch, a covered way, and a glacis; but the ditch was shallow, and exposed to no flanking fire, and the covered way had no communication with the body of the place. Fifty guns of old construction were mounted upon the ramparts, but they were without carriages and in bad order; and the ditch was wholly wanting where the walls adjoined the Dnieper. Three gates only afforded an entrance into the town, one of which led to Krasnoi, one to a suburb, and the third across the Dnieper to Moscow. Near the gate of Krasnoi was a half-moon beyond the ditch, intended to cover a breach in the walls, still called the "Royal Breach," made by Sigismund, king of Poland, in the days when Sarmatian grandeur had not yet been torn in pieces by democratic frenzy and external cupidity. A citadel of more modern construction was still less capable of defence, from the decayed state of its ramparts, which were only of mouldering earth, that in many places might be ascended without difficulty.² The cathedral, a venerable old edifice with vast gilded domes, was

² Segur, i.
266. Bout. i.
258, 259.
Chamb. i.
311, 312.
Clausewitz,
120, 121.

an object of the highest religious veneration to the peasantry of Russia; and being the frontier and one of the chief cities of the old empire, the preservation of the place was an object of the utmost solicitude to the soldiers.

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At four in the morning, Murat and Ney appeared before Smolensko, and the Emperor, having arrived an hour after, ordered an immediate attack on the citadel by Ney's corps, which Raefskoi repulsed with great loss before any succour from the main army arrived. Still the utmost anxiety possessed the Russian generals, and every eye was anxiously turned towards the side of Krasnoi, from which the main army might be expected; for the French columns, in enormous masses, were fast crowding round the town, and already the standards of a hundred and fifty thousand men could be counted from the spires of the cathedral. At length vast clouds of dust were seen afar off, in the plain on the opposite side of the river, and through their openings long black columns resplendent with steel, appeared advancing with the utmost rapidity towards the walls of the city.* It was Barclay and Bagrathion hastening to the relief of their comrades, at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men. Indescribable was the enthusiasm which this joyous sight produced: every one felt at once relieved from death or captivity. To the gloom of despair succeeded the transports of hope in every bosom. Hands pressed hands in silence; every eye was radiant with joy. Bagrathion was the first to enter, and, having secured the important communication of the bridges, instantly reinforced the heroic band who had so nobly maintained their post against the enemy.^{1*}

42.
First attack
of Ney on the
citadel, which
is repulsed.
Aug. 16.

¹ Segur, i.
268. Fain, i.
363, 364.
Bout. i. 260.
Chamb. i.
298.

Napoleon, conceiving that the enemy was resolved to defend Smolensko with all his forces, immediately made his dispositions for a general attack on the following day. His army, exclusive of the corps of Junot and the Viceroy,

* “Dalla cittade intanto un ch' alla guarda
Sta d' alta torre, e scopre i monti e i campi,
Colaggiuso la polve alzarsi guarda,
Sì che par che gran nube in aria stampi;
Par che baleni quella nube ed arda,
Come di fiamme gravida e di lampi.
Poi lo splendor' de lucidi metalli
Scerne, e distingue gli uomini e i cavalli.”

Tasso, *Gerus. Liber. iii. 9.*

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43.

Napoleon's
dispositions
for a general
attack on the
town. Noble
appearance of
his army.

which were not come up, amounted to a hundred and eighty thousand men, with five hundred pieces of cannon. The Imperial Guard was in the centre: Murat, Ney, and Davoust, at the head of their respective forces, were prepared to commence the attack. The Emperor planted his tent in the midst of the first line, almost within cannon-shot of the city. Never was a nobler spectacle presented in military annals than the French army exhibited on the day preceding the grand attack on Smolensko. The simultaneously converging of so vast a multitude from all directions to the westward, presented to those who watched their movements from the domes of the cathedral, at first a confused multitude of men, horses, artillery, and chariots, who covered the earth as far as the eye could reach; but by degrees order began to appear in the chaos: the different corps and squadrons took up their allotted ground; the artillery ranged itself on the prominent eminences, and the admirable arrangements of modern discipline appeared in their highest lustre. Silently the troops defiled out of the crowd, and took up their appointed stations; no sound of drums or trumpets was heard, as on a day of parade; the solemnity of the occasion, the awful nature of the contest which awaited them, had impressed every heart: even the voice of the chiefs when giving the word of command was grave, sometimes faltering, though with other emotions than those of fear.^{1*}

¹ Chamb. i.
309, 310.

44.

The Russian
army retires
in the night,
leaving a
strong rear-
guard in the
city.
Aug. 17.

But the Russian general had no intention of hazarding a general battle in a situation where he was exposed to the risk of being cut off from his communications with Moscow and the interior. Contrary to the opinion of Bagrathion and the principal officers of both armies, he resolved to retreat, and hold Smolensko merely by such a rearguard as might enable the troops to withdraw on the road to Moscow in safety. Bagrathion accordingly defiled out of the city at four in the morning of the 17th, in the

* “ὅς τ’ ἴπασσύτεραι Δαναῶν κίοντο φάλαγγες
Ναυλεμέως πόλεμόνδε· κίλει δὲ οἷσιν ἑκαστος
Ἕγχιμόνων· οἳ δ’ ἄλλοι ἀκὴν ἴσαν, (οὐδέ γε φάιντο)
τόσσον λαὸν ἵππεσθαι ἔχοντ’ ἐν στήθεσιν αὐδῆν,
Σιγῇ διδιδότες σημανταίρας· ἄμφι δὲ πᾶσι
Τεύχεα ποικίλ’ ἔλαμπι, τὰ εἰμένοι ἰστιχόοντο.”

Iliad, iv. 427.

How identical is the noble spirit in every age! What a true prophet is a poet! How true is human nature to the heroic visions of genius!

direction of Elnia, to secure the road to the capital, and took post with the main body of the army behind the little stream of the Kolodnia, about four miles distant; while Barclay, with the corps of Doctoroff and Bagawouth, still held the ramparts of Smolensko. Napoleon, exasperated at the sight of the retiring columns, and unable, after several efforts, to find a ford in the river in order to reach them, ordered a general assault, and at two o'clock in the afternoon all the columns approached the ramparts. In doing so he was actuated merely by his thirst for a *coup-de-main* to throw a lustre over the campaign; for, by the retreat of the Russian army, the town had ceased to be an object of importance, and the rear-guard who still held it, might, by crossing the river, with ease be compelled to evacuate it on the following day.¹

¹ Segur, i. 275. Bout. i. 262, 299. Fain, i. 367, 368. Chamb. i. 314, 315.

Ney advanced to the attack of the citadel; Davoust and Lobau towards the suburbs which lay before the ramparts; while Poniatowski, with sixty pieces of cannon, was destined to descend and enfilade the banks of the Dnieper, and destroy the bridges which connected the old and new city. But the Russians were not unprepared for their reception. The suburbs were filled with musketeers ready to contest every inch of ground; and the ramparts, defended by two hundred pieces of heavy cannon and thirty thousand admirable troops, vomited an incessant fire on the assailants. Still the French masses, preceded by a numerous artillery, advanced with stern resolution to the attack. After an obstinate conflict, the besiegers established themselves in the suburbs, and a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, within point-blank range, battered the walls of the city. The French army, stationed on the amphitheatre of surrounding heights, beheld with breathless anxiety the impending conflict, and announced with loud shouts the advance and success of their comrades. The Viceroy's corps and that of Junot successively arrived before five o'clock, and formed the reserve of the assailants; so that nearly two hundred thousand combatants were engaged in the assault, or grouped round the town, prepared to support the more advanced columns. But it was in vain that their batteries thundered against the ancient walls;² that column after column advanced through a storm of shot to the assault

45. Bloody attack on the town, which proves unsuccessful. Aug. 17.

² Segur, i. 275, 277. Bout. i. 265, 267. Fain, i. 368, 371. Chamb. i. 315, 318.

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of the citadel; and that the ardent intrepidity of the Poles sought to wrest from Russia the key of their independence, so often in former days mastered by their arms.

46.
Repulse of
Napoleon,
and results of
the battle.

The thickness of the ramparts defied the efforts of the artillery, and the valour of the assailants sought in vain to wrest the gates from their defenders. Towards evening, the French howitzers succeeded in setting fire to some houses near the ramparts, and the flames, seizing on the wooden streets, spread with frightful rapidity; but the firmness of the Russians remained unshaken, and, placed between the fire of the enemy in front and the burning city behind, they continued to present an undaunted resistance to the assaults of their enemies. Discouraged by the failure of such repeated and bloody attacks, and having experienced the total inability of his artillery, without regular approaches, to breach the massy walls of the town, Napoleon, at seven in the evening, commanded his troops to draw off, and at nine the cannonade ceased at all points. The Russians, after an arduous conflict, remained masters of the city; and their advanced posts reoccupied the covered way. Thus the French Emperor, who had brought seventy thousand men to the attack, had the mortification to find all his efforts foiled by a Russian corps whose force never exceeded thirty thousand men, supported by the formidable ramparts which he had the boldness to expect to carry by a *coup-de-main*. Fully fifteen thousand men were lost to the invaders in these fruitless assaults; while the Russians, on the 17th alone, lost nearly six thousand, and during the whole conflict not less than ten thousand men.¹

¹ Bout. i. 268.
Segur, i. 276.
Chamb. i.
332. Fain, i.
377, 378.

47.
Splendid
appearance
of the burn-
ing city.

The weather was calm and serene, and the unclouded sky reminded the Italian soldiers of the sunsets in their beautiful country. To the roar of artillery and the tumult of mortal conflict, succeeded a night of tranquillity unusual in the midst of such numerous assemblages of men, the result of the fatigue and exhaustion of the preceding days. During this momentary repose the fire spread with unresisted violence, and a vast column of flame ascended from the interior of the city. Around this blazing centre the corps of the French army were grouped in dense masses for several miles in circum-

ference; the light of their watch-fires illuminated the heavens; but every eye was arrested by the spectacle of the burning city within. A dark band in front marked the yet unbroken line of the battlements; every loophole and embrasure was clearly defined by the resplendent light behind, whence volumes of flame and burning smoke arose, as from a vast volcano, over half the heavens: a lurid light, like that of Vesuvius, was cast over the extended bivouacs of the French army, while the lofty domes of the cathedral, still untouched by the conflagration, stood in dark magnificence above the ocean of fire. The troops beheld with dismay the splendid spectacle, and, uncertain of the event, rested in suspense all night on their arms.¹

At three in the morning, a patrol of Davoust's scaled the walls, and penetrated without resistance into the interior of the town. Finding neither inhabitants nor opponents, he returned to his corps, and the French advanced guard speedily entered the walls. They found the streets deserted. The work of destruction, begun by the French howitzers, had been completed by the voluntary sacrifice of the inhabitants, who had fled with the retiring corps of their countrymen; and the invading columns, in all the pomp of military splendour, traversed in silence a ruined city, filled only with smoking walls and dying men. Never did the horrors of war appear in more striking colours than to the invading troops as they entered that devoted city. Almost all the houses were consumed or in ruins; dying soldiers or citizens encumbered the streets; a few miserable wretches were alone to be seen ransacking the yet smoking remains, for any relics of their property which might have survived the conflagration. In the midst of this scene of wo, the cathedral and churches which had withstood the flames, alone offered an asylum to the unfortunate inhabitants; while the martial columns of the French army, marching in the finest order to the sound of military music through the wreck occasioned by their arms, presented a grand and imposing spectacle. So skilfully, however, had the Russian retreat been conducted, that the magazines in the town had all been destroyed; the wounded, and great part of the inhabitants, withdrawn;² and the bridges

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¹ Segur, i.
277. Bout. i.
269. Chamb.
i. 318, 319.

48.
Retreat of
the Russians
from Smo-
lensko.
Aug. 18.

² Segur, i.
279, 280.
Lab. 105.
Chamb. i.
320. Bout. i.
269, 270.
Larrey, iv.
30.

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49.
Circular
march of
Barclay to
regain the
Moscow road,
and to re-
join Bagra-
thion's corps.

over the Dnieper broken down, amidst the horrors of the nocturnal conflagration following that dreadful day; leaving naked walls, and the cannon which mounted them, as the only trophies to the conqueror.

The abandonment of Smolensko, long regarded as the bulwark of Old Russia, was a matter of profound regret to the Russian soldiers, and furnished Napoleon with abundant matter for congratulation in his bulletins. But he soon found that the retreating enemy had lost none of their courage from this catastrophe. A column of French having passed the Dnieper at a ford, and entered the eastern suburb of Smolensko, were instantly attacked, and driven back across the river, by Baron Korf and the Russian rearguard, while the main body leisurely continued their retreat towards their brethren under Bagrathion. In conducting this retreat, however, the Russian commander had very great difficulties to encounter. Bagrathion had retired by the route to Moscow, in order to prevent the enemy from interposing between the army and that metropolis; while Barclay, finding that route exposed to the fire of the French artillery when his columns began to withdraw, had taken the road to St Petersburg, and every mile that he advanced led him farther from his comrades. On this occasion, the bad effects of the independent and co-ordinate command which Barclay and Bagrathion had of their respective armies, and the jealousy and misunderstanding to which it necessarily gave rise, had wellnigh proved fatal to the empire; for if the two armies had marched a day longer on these diverging lines, their subsequent junction would have become impossible; and Napoleon, with his immense host interposed between them, would have proved irresistible. In these circumstances, a circular flank movement became necessary; a hazardous operation at any time, but more especially so to a retreating army, encumbered with an immense train of cannon, and in presence of an enterprising enemy. Nevertheless Barclay, seeing no alternative, adopted this perilous course, and for a day the fate of Russia was suspended by a thread; for a vigorous attack by Napoleon on the moving columns would have renewed the disasters of Austerlitz.¹

¹ Bout. i.
270, 272.
Jom. iv. 96,
99. Segur, i.
281, 321.
Chamb. i.
222, 223.
Moniteur,
Sept. 2, 1812.

Fortunately Napoleon was ignorant of the advantage

which lay within his grasp, or was not in a condition to avail himself of it; and a severe action with the rearguard alone took place, in circumstances where a general action might have been expected. Barclay, fully sensible of the impending danger, detached a strong body from his army to reinforce the rearguard of Bagrathion on the Moscow road, with instructions to proceed by forced marches to the point of junction, and defend to the last extremity the first tenable position, in order to give the main army time to regain, by cross roads, the Moscow route. Napoleon, having re-established the bridges over the Dnieper, advanced his columns both on the roads of Moscow and St Petersburg. Ney passed the river before daybreak on the 19th, by the light of the burning suburbs, and advanced on the Moscow road as far as VALUTINA, where the Russian rearguard, stationed by Barclay to cover his cross movement from the St Petersburg to the Moscow road, was strongly posted on the opposite side of a ravine, through which the little stream of the Kolodnia flowed. The troops engaged were at first inconsiderable, but they were gradually strengthened on both sides, and the combat which ensued was the most obstinate that occurred in the whole war. Notwithstanding his utmost efforts, the Russian general Touczkoff was driven from his first position, and compelled to retire behind the rivulet; but being there reinforced by fresh troops, and eight pieces of heavy artillery, which Barclay brought up in person to the scene of danger, he renewed the conflict, and drove the enemy back again across the stream.¹

Napoleon was no sooner informed of the serious and unexpected resistance which Ney experienced from the Russian rearguard, than he despatched orders to the division Gudin of Davoust's corps, already signalled at the battle of Auerstadt,* to advance to his support; and at the same time, fearing that the enemy's whole army had assembled for battle, gave directions to Morand, who with another division of Davoust's corps was a little in the rear on a cross-road, which would have brought him direct upon the Russian flank, to halt and retire. This retrograde movement was performed with great difficulty, as

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50.

Battle of
Valutina.
Aug. 19.1 Bout. i.
276. Chamb.
i. 328. Jom.
iv. 100.

51.

Measures of
Napoleon to
restore the
combat.
Desperate
valour on
both sides.* *Ante*, Chap. xliii. § 52.

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¹ Bont. i.
276, 280.
Fain, i. 382,
384. Chamb.
i. 325. Jom.
iv. 100, 101.

52.
Heroic re-
sistance of
Touczkoff,
and attack of
Ney.

² Jom. iv.
100, 102.
Bont. i. 276,
283. Fain, i.
382, 385.
Segur, i. 299,
300. Chamb.
i. 325, 330.
Moniteur,
Sept. 2, 1812.

at the time the order was received Morand's troops were involved in an old pine wood, where the intermixture of the advancing and retreating columns created extreme confusion. It was hard to say whether the Russians engaged owed most to this unusual want of decision on the part of the Emperor, or to the hesitation of Junot, who, having received orders merely to take a position on the right bank of the Dnieper immediately after crossing it, had not moral courage enough to undertake the responsibility of attacking the Russian rearguard posted beyond that river, when engaged with Ney. This indecision was the more blamable, as his position would have enabled him to assail it with every advantage in rear, at the moment when it was already hard pressed by the enemy in front, and he was strenuously urged to do so by Murat.¹

Thus left to his own resources, with the assistance only of Gudin's division, twelve thousand strong, Ney, however, resolutely maintained the contest. He repeatedly attacked the enemy, both with musketry and the bayonet. Gudin's men outdid even their former glorious exploits: four times did they cross the stream with the utmost intrepidity, and ascend the opposite bank with fixed bayonets; but they were constantly driven back by the devoted heroism of the Russians, who, aware of the vital importance of maintaining the position, were resolved to perish to the last man rather than abandon it. The generals on both sides came up to the spot: General Gudin was struck down by a cannon-shot when bravely leading his men to the charge; and General Touczkoff* made prisoner in the midst of his staff by a furious irruption of the French cavalry. But the loss of their leaders made no diminution in the fury of the combat: both sides fought with invincible obstinacy. The contest continued with various success till nightfall; but at the close of the day the Russians retained their position, and, under cover of their heroic rearguard, the main army of Barclay had regained in safety the Moscow road.²

This action, in which the French lost eight thousand, and the Russians six thousand men, had an important effect on the spirit of both armies. Ney commenced the

* The commander of the cavalry, not the general of division bearing that name.

combat with twenty-five thousand men; and by the accession of Gudin his force was raised to thirty-seven thousand: while General Touczkoff had hardly five thousand under his orders in the first instance; and the whole reinforcements which were afterwards brought up to his assistance did not raise his troops to above twenty-five thousand men. The brave General Gudin was killed by the cannon-shot which struck him down while leading his troops across the stream, already red with human blood; and his loss, in the opinion of Napoleon, would have more than balanced a victory. Notwithstanding their devoted valour, however, the Russians owed much to fortune on this occasion. Had Napoleon pressed forward with the main body of his forces, all the firmness of the rearguard could not have saved their army from total defeat while accomplishing its perilous movement. They themselves were astonished at not being attacked in flank by the cavalry under Murat; and the conduct of Junot, in not hastening to the scene of action, appeared so inexcusable, that it was with the utmost difficulty the Emperor was dissuaded from at once depriving him of his command. Morand, with his numerous division of Davoust's corps, was abreast of Valutina, at so short a distance from the Russian right that every cannon-shot was distinctly heard; and, if not restrained by the Emperor's orders, he might by suddenly appearing have decided the victory. Finally, Napoleon himself did not arrive on the field till three on the following morning, when he found only the dead and the dying, instead of the desperate conflict which his eagle eye might have converted into an important victory.¹

The Russians in the night continued their retreat, and retired by the Moscow road without farther molestation from their enemies: and Napoleon visited at break of day the field of battle. The regiments of Gudin's division were reduced to skeletons: the soldiers were black with powder, and their bayonets bent with the violence of the encounter; the earth was ploughed with cannon-shot, the trees were torn and mutilated, the field was covered with broken carriages, wounded horses, and mangled bodies. The horrors of the scene had filled the minds of the survivors with melancholy; but the presence of Napoleon restored their military ardour. He was prodigal of his praise, and

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53.

Results of
this bloody
action. Sin-
gular good
fortune of the
Russians.

¹ Bout. i.
284. Segur,
299, 304, 305.
Jom. iv. 102.
103. Chamb.
i. 327, 329.
Fain, i. 385,
386.

54.

Napoleon's
visit to the
field of battle.

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of those acts of kindness by which he won the hearts of his soldiers. "With such men," he exclaimed, "you might conquer the world: this is the most glorious of our fields: the dead have won immortal glory." With his own hands he delivered an eagle to the 127th regiment, which had not hitherto acquired that honour, and loaded the troops of the other corps with decorations. The regiments were formed successively in hollow circles, in the midst of which the Emperor inquired of the officers who were the most deserving, and, if the men confirmed their nomination, the appointment of the persons named to superior rank was instantly completed. These honours, bestowed at such a moment, and from such hands, filled the troops with enthusiasm: and the shattered remains of the regiments, proud of their diminished numbers, exulted in the thought that Europe was resounding with their praise.¹

¹ Segur, i. 307, 309.
Fain, i. 390.
Chamb. i. 330.

55
General uneasiness and depression of the French army.

In truth, a great effort was necessary to support the spirit of the army, which was considerably damped by the fatigues and dangers of the campaign. The objects that met the eye in Germany, and as far as the Oder, reminded the soldiers of France; but in Poland and Lithuania every thing wore a novel and gloomy aspect. The troops were seized with disquietude at finding themselves incessantly advancing through dark forests, intersected only by swampy streams or rocky dells; their spirits sank at the interminable solitudes which surrounded them in every direction; and the consciousness of their numbers only added to their apprehensions, from the obvious inadequacy of the country to provide for their necessities. The young conscripts, who advanced upon the traces of the Grand Army, were depressed by the melancholy remains which every where presented themselves. Dead horses, broken carriages, and dying men, obstructed the roads and infected the atmosphere: while the veterans who had combated in the front contrasted the miserable quarters which they had gained amidst the ruins of Smolensko with the smiling villages they had abandoned in their native land. Even the chiefs were shaken by the general contagion: and those who had risen to the highest rank sighed to think that, after a life spent in arms, and wealth honourably acquired,² they

² Segur, i. 286, 287, 291.

were reduced like common soldiers to the never-ending hardships of wretched food, incessant fatigue, and squalid habitations.

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Nor were the reports of the hospitals or the commissariat calculated to allay these gloomy anticipations. Already the march through Lithuania had cost the allied troops a half, the native French a fourth of their army, miserable victims of intemperance, disease, and fatigue. Out of thirty thousand Bavarians who set out from Munich, only twelve thousand entered upon the first actions on the Dwina.* Typhus fever and dysentery, the well-known attendants on military suffering, had every where broken out in the most alarming manner, and swept off thousands in all the great hospitals of the army. Wilna and Witepsk were converted into vast charnel-houses, where contagion completed the unfinished work of human destruction: and even the spacious convents of Smolensko, which had not suffered from the flames, were incapable of containing the multitudes of wounded who had been disabled under its walls. Such was the accumulation of corpses around the ramparts of that city, that they exceeded all that the strength of the survivors could bury; and the smell which they diffused in every direction gave rise to a frightful epidemic, which in the end proved more fatal to the troops than the sword of the enemy. All the cottages in its environs were filled with wounded soldiers, both French and Russian, who, crowded together often without either straw or provisions, made known their existence and sufferings by the groans and lamentations which they uttered.¹ Hundreds were forgotten, and perished miserably in the general confusion: the streets were blocked up by the endless files of chariots,

56.
Enormous
losses already
sustained
from sickness
and fatigue.

¹ Segur, i.
291, 312, 313.
Chamb. i.
333. St. Cyr,
Hist. Mil. iii.
62, 79, 105.

* "At its departure from the Bavarian states this corps was estimated at *thirty thousand men*; on leaving Wilna it was still twenty-five thousand; but the march to Witepsk, without any other subsistence than two rations of bad bread each man, reduced it a half: so that on its entry into Polotsk, *without having seen the enemy, it could only muster twelve thousand combatants*. Thirteen thousand five hundred men had been lost by fatigue or want of provisions; of whom eight thousand were already no more, and the greater part of the sick gave no hope of recovery. It may easily be imagined from this in what a miserable state the troops under arms were: all, generals and soldiers, had been seized with a violent dysentery, which, in many cases, was combined with other complaints. It could not be otherwise; for the soldier had nothing to nourish him but meat without either bread or vegetables, in a country where the water was bad. There were no fermented liquors, and the mills were destroyed. It was the same with all the other corps in the French army."—MARSHAL ST CYR, *Histoire Militaire*, iii. 62, 63.

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bearing the sick and maimed, which incessantly traversed them; and such was the multitude of amputated limbs which there was no time to destroy, that they accumulated in bloody heaps, and infected the air with their smell.

57.
Napoleon's
reasons for a
farther
advance.

To any other mind than that of Napoleon these disastrous circumstances would have furnished reasons for delay: but to him they afforded only additional and cogent arguments for an advance. He was aware how much his empire depended on opinion, and how rapidly these sinister auguries would be known to Europe, if not eclipsed by the lustre of a victory. "The condition of the army," said he, "is frightful: I know it. At Wilna, one-half were stragglers; now they amount to two-thirds: there is not a moment to lose: we must grasp at peace, and it can only be found at Moscow. Besides, the state of the army is such as to render a halt impossible: constant advance alone keeps it together: you may lead it forward, but you cannot arrest its movement. We have advanced too far to retreat. If I had nothing in view but military glory, I would have nothing to do but return to Smolensko, and extend my wings on either side so as to crush Wittgenstein and Tormasoff. These operations would be brilliant; they would form a glorious termination to the campaign; but they would not conclude the war. Peace is before us: we have only to march eight days to obtain it: so near our object, it is impossible to deliberate: let us advance to Moscow."¹

¹ Segur, i.
293. Fain,
i. 407, 408.

58.
Reasons
which in-
duced the
Russian
generals to
prepare for
battle.

On the other side, the feelings of the Russian generals, as to the propriety of a farther retreat, underwent a change. The object in retiring from the frontier had been, to draw the enemy into a situation where his original superiority of force might be diminished by the fatigues and the diseases incident to a protracted advance. These causes, joined to the bloody battles recently fought, had already operated so powerfully, that the effective French army was not half its original amount; while the losses of the Russians were more than supplied by the great armaments prepared in the interior. But a farther retreat would sacrifice all these advantages, because it would surrender to the enemy the capital and the richest provinces of the empire, from whence the principal resources for maintaining the war were to be drawn,

while the invader would reap all the fruits of a victory without its dangers. The troops had long murmured at continually retiring before their enemies; and the prospect of abandoning Moscow without a struggle, was likely to excite the utmost dissatisfaction not only in the army but the nation. So strong had these feelings become, that not even the authority of the Emperor was adequate to repress them. These reasons induced Barclay to resolve to give battle in the first convenient situation; and he despatched orders to General Milaradowitch to hasten the levies in the interior, and direct the corps when formed to Wiazma.¹

Napoleon was still further encouraged to advance from Smolensko, by the intelligence which he received at that juncture from the armies on his two flanks. On the 12th August, Schwartzenberg, who had arrived with his corps of Austrians to the support of Reynier, attacked Tormasoff with nearly forty thousand men, who could only collect twenty-five thousand to oppose him. In an early part of the engagement, the left wing of the Russians was turned, notwithstanding the strength of their position, which was covered both in front and flank by morasses; but the Austrians did not follow up their advantages with sufficient vigour; and, by throwing back his left wing, Tormasoff contrived to prolong the contest without serious loss till nightfall, when he retired from the field, and got behind the Styr, with the loss of four thousand men and a few pieces of cannon. This victory, though by no means decisive, preserved the Grand-duchy of Warsaw from invasion, and relieved Napoleon, for the time at least, from the inquietudes which he was beginning to feel for the communications in his rear.²

On the other side, Wittgenstein, on the day on which Tormasoff was engaged with the Austrians, attacked the advanced guard of Oudinot on the Svoiana, and drove it back with the loss of fifteen hundred men. Oudinot, in consequence, fell back to Polotsk, where he was joined by the Bavarians, and his army raised to above thirty-five thousand men. Wittgenstein, with only twenty-four thousand, had the courage to hazard a general attack on the French lines posted in front of Polotsk, and a bloody action ensued on the 17th August, without any decisive

¹ Bout. i.
286, 287.
Claus. 131,
132.

59.
Operations of
Schwartzenberg
against
Tormasoff.
Aug. 12.

² Jom. iv.
105. Segur,
i. 285.

60.
And of St
Cyr against
Wittgenstein.
Aug. 12.

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Aug. 17.

Aug. 18.

advantage on either side, but in which Oudinot was severely wounded. On the 18th, the battle was renewed, and both sides fought with the utmost obstinacy; but in the end, although their cavalry had driven the French to the walls of the city, the Russians retired with the loss of seven cannon and two thousand men. The French, however, who had suffered nearly as much, were in no condition to follow up their advantage. St Cyr, who commanded after the wound of Oudinot, was, in consequence, made a marshal of the empire. Notwithstanding his success, he did not move forward till the 22d, when his advanced guard, consisting of the Bavarians under

¹ Bout. ii. 55, General Wrede, made an attack on the Russian rearguard, but experienced a severe defeat. Wittgenstein removed his headquarters to the fortified position of Sewokhino, where he awaited the reinforcements which were expected from Finland and St Petersburg.¹

61.
And of Macdonald
against Riga.
Advance of
Victor to
Smolensko.

Still farther to the Russian right, Marshal Macdonald having advanced to the neighbourhood of Riga with the corps under his command, consisting chiefly of Prussians, General Essen made a vigorous sortie, and attacked General Grawert at Eckau, whom he defeated with the loss of twelve hundred men. The operations, in consequence, languished on the side of Livonia; and nothing of importance occurred till a later period of the campaign. The corps of Marshal Victor, which had now come up to the Dwina, became a body of great importance, as it occupied a central position on the great road to Smolensko, in such a manner as to constitute the reserve at once of the Grand Army, Oudinot, and Schwartzenberg. Napoleon gave orders to him to advance to Smolensko, and intrusted the whole of Lithuania to his orders. This was done in pursuance of his usual system of placing powerful bodies of troops in echelon in his rear to preserve his communications. Thirty thousand men stationed in that strong position, directly in the rear of the Grand Army, and on its line of communications, appeared to give great security to the enterprise of the Emperor. His instructions were: "To direct all his attention and forces to the general object, which is to secure the communication from Wilna, by Minsk and Smolensko, with the imperial headquarters.² The army which you command is the reserve of the Grand

² Napoleon to Victor, Aug. 9, 1812. Fain, i. 425, 427. Bout. ii. 36, 62. Jom. iv. 108.

Army; if the route by Smolensko to the Grand Army is interrupted, you must re-open it at all hazards. Possibly I may not find peace where I am about to seek it; but, even in that case, supported by so strong a reserve, well posted, my retreat would be secure, and need not be precipitate."

The advance of Victor to Smolensko left a void between the Niemen and the Vistula which it was essential to fill up; and here, too, the provident care of the Emperor had arranged what seemed the means of absolute security. Angereau's great army, above fifty thousand strong, received orders to advance from the line of the Elbe and the Oder, where it lay, to the Niemen, and occupy all the principal points of communication from Berlin to the Lithuanian provinces; while the hundred cohorts of the National Guard of France, which had been put on a respectable footing before the Emperor's departure from Paris, were moved forward from the fortresses of the Rhine, where they had been completing their discipline and organisation, to the strongholds on the Elbe. Instructions were at the same time sent to Schwartzenberg, who was reinforced by some Polish regiments, to advance against Tormasoff, and secure the rear of the Grand Army from insult or injury from that quarter. Finally, to provide a reserve in France itself, and complete the great chain of communication from the Seine to the Moskwa, the Emperor ordered a new levy by conscription of one hundred and twenty thousand men, from the youth who attained the age of eighteen to nineteen, in 1813. Thus, the whole of western Europe was to be precipitated on the devoted realm of Russia; and the vast army of five hundred thousand, which the Emperor commanded in person, was but the advanced part of the mighty host which was to drive back to Asia the Tartar race.¹

Encouraged by these successes, and having completed those dispositions which appeared to secure his rear, Napoleon left Smolensko with his Guards, and followed the Russian army, which was slowly retiring on the Moscow road. Barclay fell back by Dorogobouge to Wiazma, and from thence to Gjatsk, where Milaradowitch, with a reserve of sixteen thousand men, joined the army. He was surveying the ground with a view to the choice

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62.

And of
Angereau
from the
Oder, and the
National
Guard of
France to the
Elbe.

¹ Fain, i.
423, 429.

63.

Advance of
Napoleon
towards
Moscow.
Aug. 22.

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of a field of battle, when he was superseded in the command by General Kutusoff, whom the Emperor had named commander-in-chief of all the armies. The wisdom of nominating to the supreme command a Russian by birth, endeared to the soldiers by his recent victories over the Turks, and who might direct the movements of the scattered forces from the Danube to the Baltic, cannot be doubted. In truth it had come to be a matter of necessity. But though Barclay was thus deprived of the fruit of his measures at the very moment when he might have expected to reap them, yet he gained immortal honour by the campaign which he had previously conducted. He had retreated above four hundred miles, in presence of an army twice as numerous as his own, headed by a general unrivalled for his talent in pursuing an enemy, without a single battalion having been broken, a single standard taken, or sustaining a greater loss in prisoners or artillery than he had inflicted on his pursuers. Scotland has good reason to be proud of her connexion with a leader capable of such achievements. History can furnish no parallel to a retreat of such peril performed with such success.¹

¹ Segur, i.
358. Bout.
i. 290, 296.

64.

Appointment
of Kutusoff
to the
supreme com-
mand, and
general joy it
gave to the
army.

Kutusoff, who was thus in her last agony called by the unanimous voice of Russia to the command of her armies, was at St Petersburg when the eventful change befell him. He had been engaged, as we have already seen, in a campaign in which signal reverses had been succeeded by glorious triumphs on the Danube; and, beyond any other general in the Russian army, he enjoyed the confidence of the soldiers. Accustomed, in the great majority of instances, to be commanded by foreign officers, they beheld with unbounded enthusiasm a native Russian at the head of their battalions, and were confirmed in this attachment by the brilliant successes with which he had redeemed the campaign on the Danube, and restored to the Muscovite standards the triumphs of Ismael and Ockzakoff.* Though victories so brilliant, however, had lately attended his arms, and a solemn Te Deum had been chanted at St Petersburg, in presence of the Emperor and court, on account of the peace with the Turks, Kutusoff himself laboured under a sort of disgrace at court, in consequence of its having been supposed that he had not

* *Ante*, Chap. lxix. § 96.

conducted the negotiations at Bucharest with the expedition which the critical state of the empire required. The courtiers, observant of the least cloud which overshadows the fortunes of a leading character, were already shunning his society; and so low had the prospects of the future saviour of Russia fallen, that he received with tears of gratitude the visit of Count Oginski, a Polish nobleman, who had formerly enjoyed his intimacy in Lithuania, and had moral courage enough not to desert him in his adversity.¹

Alexander was most unwilling, and justly so, to deprive Barclay of the command, as he with reason regarded his retreat from the Niemen to the Moskwa as a model of military skill, and as destined, perhaps, in the end to prove the salvation of the empire. But the public mind was now agitated to the greatest degree by the fall of Smolensko, and the continued retreat of the Russian armies towards Moscow; the ferment at St Petersburg was extreme, and all classes concurred in demanding, with loud cries, the appointment of Kutusoff, as the only guarantee for the integrity of the empire. Alexander yielded to the torrent, and the veteran general was appointed to the supreme command. The universal transports of all classes—nobles, army, and people—upon this appointment, proved how much he had endeared himself to the nation: the multitude in the streets threw themselves at his feet when he went to the cathedral in state, to offer up his supplications for the success of the armies, and besought him to save Russia. Loaded with their benedictions, accompanied by their prayers, he set out for the army, charged with the salvation of his country and the deliverance of Europe.²

The whole life of the veteran who was now called to the momentous duty of directing the armies under the walls of Moscow, and whose brief subsequent career was attended with such extraordinary results upon the fortunes of Europe, had been devoted to the service of his country. He was nearly seventy when he was thus again summoned to measure swords with Napoleon,—having been born in 1745, and educated at the military academy at Strasburg. He had entered the army at sixteen; and, in 1765, commenced his military career with five successive campaigns against the Poles, and afterwards served three against the Turks. The snows of age had given him the caution of

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¹ Oginski's
Mem. iii.
186, 187.
Claus. 94, 95.
Bout. i. 302.

65.
Alexander
unwillingly
gives him the
command.
Aug. 12.

² Oginski's
Memoirs, iii.
186, 187.
Bout. i. 302,
303. De
Staël, Dix
Années
d'Exil, 348.
Claus. 94, 98.

66.
His charac-
ter, and præ-
vious achieve-
ments.

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experience without extinguishing the fire of youth. He was descended from a noble Russian ancestry, and connected by marriage with the principal families of Moscow. His military renown had suffered less than might have been expected from the reverse of Austerlitz, as it was well known that the fatal cross-march which brought on the disasters of that unhappy day,* had been undertaken contrary to his advice. The recent successes gained in the war against the Turks had completely re-established his reputation. He had been repeatedly wounded in his different campaigns, and one of his injuries had deprived him of an eye. His height was moderate, his figure corpulent, and his manners distinguished by good-humour and bonhomie; but under this apparently simple exterior he concealed a remarkable degree of finesse and diplomatic address peculiar to his country, and in an especial manner unknown to the German race. He appeared, to an ordinary observer, destitute of mental activity, and to be allowing the officers of his staff to be taking the entire direction of affairs upon themselves; but in secret he was a close observer of what was going on, and possessed an extraordinary degree of cunning and dissimulation, which in the end made him more than a match for all the ministers of Napoleon.¹

¹ Clausewitz,
141. Chamb.
ii. 27, 28.
Valent. 171.
Biog. Univ.
xxii. 558.
(Kutusoff.)

67.
And habits
as a general.

He had studied war profoundly, not only in the field but in the closet, and had brought an extensive theoretic acquaintance with military principles to bear on the experience which a long and active life in harness had given of its actual details. The soldiers were warmly attached to him, from the conviction acquired by experience, that without relaxing in the necessary rigour of discipline and subordination, he was at all times careful not to overload them with needless exactions, and ever solicitous about their material comforts; while the recent and glorious victories which he had gained over the Turks, inspired them with a confidence which no general had enjoyed since the days of Suwarroff. The companion in arms of that illustrious warrior, he was like him attached to old customs, and ingrafted the affection of the soldiers on national manners, customs somewhat antiquated, and a scrupulous regard for the observances of religion, the

• *Ante*, Chap. xl. § 121.

great lever by which the public mind in Russia is to be affected. These qualities, from a knowledge of their influence on the soldiers, recommended him also to the higher and more enlightened classes, and compensated in general estimation the disadvantage of the advanced age of sixty-seven years, and the recollection of the fatal reverse, which, under his command, the Russian arms had experienced at Austerlitz. It may safely be affirmed, that never did commander undertake a hazardous and difficult duty more warmly supported by all classes of his countrymen.¹

The arrival of Kutusoff diffused general joy amongst the Russian troops. The successful termination of the Turkish war was considered as a presage of victory by the nation. His engaging manners, and paternal solicitude for their welfare, had long endeared him to the soldiers; confidence speedily succeeded to depression, and the troops began to burnish their arms and sharpen their flints in expectation of an immediate engagement. But it was no easy matter to justify these expectations. The army was now hardly fifty leagues from Moscow, and that capital could only be saved by a general battle; yet how engage in one with any prospect of success, with an army still (notwithstanding the arrival of sixteen thousand new levies and ten thousand of the militia of Moscow) greatly inferior in number to their opponents, and grievously depressed by the length of their retreat? Nevertheless, it had become indispensable to run such a hazard, in order to check the consternation which, since the fall of Smolensko, was beginning to spread in the interior of Russia; and Kutusoff readily embraced the views of Barclay as to the necessity of no longer delaying the perilous alternative. More than once in the course of the retreat, General Toll and the staff-officers had examined the ground with a view to selecting a field of battle, but none suited to the purpose could be found, as the country, perfectly level the whole way, afforded no positions sufficiently strong to counterbalance the still decided superiority in numbers of the French army.²

On his side, however, Napoleon was not easy. During their march from Smolensko, the French army experienced great difficulties, which could only have been overcome by the experience and resources of their chiefs.

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¹ Chamb. ii.
27, 28. Bout.
i. 302. Val-
entin, Guerre
des Turcs, p.
174.

68.
Arrival of
Kutusoff at
the head-
quarters of
the army.

Aug. 29.

² Bout. i.
303, 305.
Chamb. ii.
28, 29. Claus.
132, 133, 148.

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69.

Extraordi-
nary skill and
order of the
Russian re-
treat, and
order of the
pursuit.

The Russians, as they retired, burned the principal towns, and the inhabitants of the country voluntarily left their houses to avoid the tempest which was lowering in their rear. With such skill was the retreat conducted, that neither cannon, equipage, nor prisoners fell into the hands of the invaders; and on one occasion, when the rearguard was attacked by Murat, the French, after an obstinate conflict, were repulsed from the field. Davoust, in a report to the Emperor upon the retreat of the Russians, observed—"It must be confessed that their retreat is conducted in admirable order. The nature of the ground determines the position of their rearguard, and not the manœuvres of Murat. Their positions are so well chosen, and defended with such vigour, that it seems as if their movements are the result of a plan previously determined on, and executed with scrupulous exactness." Murat, at the head of a long column of twenty thousand cavalry, headed the pursuit; but it was in vain that the squadrons toiled through clouds of dust, from morning till night, under a burning sun; the horses sank under their fatigues without being able to reach the enemy. After this enormous body of horse came the infantry, marching in three great columns, all abreast; that in the centre kept the high-road, and was composed of the corps of Davoust, still the first both in numbers and discipline; on the right, in the fields, marched the corps of Poniatowski; on the left, that of Eugene; the Imperial Guard on the highway behind Davoust, and Ney in the rear. The artillery of these corps found their way as they best could, along the country roads or open plains parallel to the great chaussée. The enormous body advanced with astonishing rapidity, without any regard to difficulties or the means of subsistence: the weak, the sickly, broken carriages, dismounted guns, lame horses, were left behind; but the head of the column still pressed on with ceaseless march, devastating the plain in its progress, and trampling under foot the whole fruits of the earth, as if a gigantic rolling-stone had been drawn along its surface.¹

¹ Bout. i. 287.
Segur, i. 318,
334. Jom. iv.
111. Chamb.
ii. 23, 26, 29.

The physical character of the country through which the army marched during its advance from Smolensko, had singularly facilitated this remarkable mode of sweeping, like a devastating flood, over a comparatively narrow space; but at the same time, it had impressed the most

sombre and gloomy presentiments on the minds of the soldiers. Its great rivers are the only striking features of that boundless plain; every thing else is lost in the immensity of space. Hardly any brooks are to be met with, so frequently does the sand obstruct their course or drain away their waters. No variety of trees is to be seen; the eternal birch alone, planted in rows along the roadsides, relieves the monotony of nature. Even the absence of stones is felt as a subject of regret; so much is the mind fatigued by never perceiving new objects, or being permitted to repose on hills, rocks, or valleys. You see nothing on either hand but vast plains of corn, which appear to have been cultivated by invisible hands, so rare does the population appear in the boundless expanse around. A few woods of birch, villages separated by vast distances from each other, all formed of wooden houses constructed in the same manner, constitute the only objects which relieve the general uniformity of the scene. The approach to towns is indicated by no symptoms of greater animation: fruits and flowers are to be seen only in a few enclosures; orchards or vineyards are nowhere to be met with. Such is the expanse of Russia that every thing is lost in it; even the chateaux of the nobility and the cottages of the people disappear. You would suppose that you were traversing a country of which the inhabitants had migrated to some other quarter of the globe. Birds, too, are wanting; animals are rarely to be met with; the unbroken extent has banished every other object except the extent itself, which incessantly haunts the imagination.¹

Extraordinary difficulties were experienced by the French army in traversing this immense country. The Russians had set fire not only to the whole magazines, but to all the towns and villages on the line of their retreat; and these, being entirely built of wood, had burned to the ground. In the yet smoking ruins the invaders could find neither shelter nor subsistence. They were driven, therefore, to send out columns to forage for subsistence to the right and left; and these bodies having no maps to guide their steps, in a country thinly inhabited, with few cross-roads, and often desolate, were frequently unsuccessful in finding provisions, and never obtained any but at an enormous cost of fatigue and trouble.

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70.

Description of the country through which the French army passed in advancing to Moscow.

¹ De Staël, Dix Années d'Exil, 248, 250.

71.

Extraordinary difficulties of the French army in their advance.

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The whole fields on the line of the retreat had been swept of their forage, and the French cavalry could find none but at the distance often of eight or ten miles from the high-road. The procuring water was a still greater difficulty alike to men and horses. The weather had for six weeks been dry, and was now intensely hot ; the springs, always scanty in that level country, were in great part dried up ; and those which still flowed as the Russians passed through, were either exhausted by the multitudes of men and horses which crowded to them to quench their thirst, or rendered so turbid by the constant stirring, and the animals' feet, as to be unfit for use.* In this extremity, recourse was had to the filthiest puddles to allay the burning heat which all felt ; and vast numbers of men and horses, after wandering all day in search of the precious element, dropped down dead at night from fatigue and thirst. The horses in particular suffered enormously from these causes. To such a degree did they affect the men, that in advancing from Smolensko to the Moskwa, though there was scarcely any fighting after Valutina, the French army sustained a loss of no less than thirty-eight thousand men, and half that number of horses ; and their effective force which, on crossing the Niemen, was three hundred and one thousand, under Napoleon in person, had sunk, on arriving at Borodino, to one hundred and thirty-three thousand.¹

On the other hand, although the Russians also suffered severely from these causes, especially the want of water, yet in many respects they were more favourably situated than the French army. They had the immense advantage of retiring in their own country, being the first to go over the ground, and daily drawing nearer to their reinforcements. Enormous convoys from the interior had been provided with admirable care, laden with provisions, leather shoes, and necessaries of all sorts ; and in addition to this, the retiring columns found in all the towns and

¹ Claus. 95,
96, 179, 180.

72.
Superior
advantages of
the Russian
army.

* "Ma non aspettar già, che di quell' oste
L' innumerabil numero ti conti.
I' vidi ch' al passar, le valli ascoste
Sotto e' teneva e i piani tutti i e monti :
Vidi che dove giunga, ove s' accoste,
Spoglia la terra, e secca i fiumi e i fonti ;
Perchè non bastan, l' acque alla lor sete,
E poco è lor ciò che la Siria miete."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. xix.* 121.

villages through which they passed large magazines of grain, on which the troops subsisted before they were committed to the flames. The young corn and rich grass in the fields supplied ample forage for the horses, though it was all consumed or trodden under foot before the French advanced guard reached them. Above all, the retreat was in a direct line, and on the great road only; while the march of the French was doubled, often tripled, in length by unavoidable excursions on either side in quest of subsistence: and thus the exhaustion was incomparably greater in the advancing than the retreating army. And the reinforcements which reached the Russians as they drew near to the depots in the interior were so considerable, as not only to compensate entirely the loss sustained in the actions near Smolensko, but render the effective force fully one hundred and thirty thousand—or above ten thousand greater than when their standards fronted those of Napoleon before its sacred walls.¹

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¹ Claus. 175,
176. Bout. i.
320. Chamb.
ii. 33.

Napoleon, perceiving from the approach to Moscow that a general battle was at hand, gave three days' rest to his army, ordered a general muster-roll to be called of his troops along the whole line, and warned the straggling detachments that if they did not join their respective corps, they would lose the honour of the approaching conflict. Orders were at the same time despatched to the parks of reserve ammunition to advance, to the artillery to have their pieces in the best order, to the cavalry to refresh their horses, and to the soldiers to sharpen their sabres and examine the locks of their muskets. Meanwhile, the Russians at length took post at BORODINO, which appeared to Kutusoff to present an eligible position for defence. The extreme right rested on the river Moskwa, which was not fordable, and on the right and centre the little stream of the Kolotza, flowing in a rocky dell, covered the line as far as the village of Borodino, which stood in the centre of the position, on an elevated ridge. On the left the army extended to the village of Semenovskoie, and the approach to it, though of easier access, was intersected by broken ravines, which promised to embarrass the movements of the enemy. To aid the advantages of nature, intrenchments were hastily thrown up by the Russian army on some parts of their line,

73.
The Russians
take post at
Borodino.
Description
of their posi-
tion there.

Sept. 2.

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¹ Chamb. ii.
30, 31. Bout.
i. 307, 308.
Segur, i. 360.
365. Fain, i.
447, ii. 4, 5.
Claus. 149.

especially on the left, where by nature it was the weakest; a wood on the right was strengthened by some fieldworks; in the centre, on the sloping banks of the Kolotza, two heavy batteries were placed; while between the centre and the left, where the position was most accessible, a great redoubt was erected on a height which commanded the whole plain in front of the army. On the extreme left three other batteries were placed, to aid by their cross fire the great redoubt; while, at the distance of nine hundred toises in front of the line, another redoubt was erected on an eminence, to retard the advance of the attacking host.¹

74.
Napoleon's
arrival on the
field of battle.
He attacks
the redoubt
in front.

On the 5th September the French army, in three great columns, passed the vast and gloomy convent of Kolot-skoi without meeting an enemy; but as it approached the destined field, clouds of Cossacks were seen traversing the plain, and behind them the Russian army, in a dense and imposing mass, was descried drawn up in battle array. At this sight the advanced guard halted, and Napoleon instantly coming forward to an eminence in the front, surveyed the position with the eye of a conqueror, and fixed, with the rapidity of lightning, on the points of attack. The first object was to seize the redoubt in front of the position, where Prince Gorchakoff commanded ten thousand men, supported by twelve pieces of heavy artillery. The attack was conducted by Murat, with an immense body of cavalry, the division of Campans, and the corps of Prince Poniatowski. With an intrepid step the French infantry advanced to within twenty yards of the redoubt: the cannon on either side vomited forth grape-shot on their opponents, and the dauntless antagonists stood at that short distance discharging musketry at each other. At length, after a frightful struggle, the redoubt was carried by an assault of the 57th French infantry; but the Russians, returning to the charge, destroyed the troops who had entered it, and it was three times taken and retaken in the course of the evening. Finally, it remained before night in the hands of the French. On the following morning, when the Emperor passed the 61st regiment, he asked the colonel where the third battalion was:² "Sire," he

² Segur, i.
364, 366, 367.
Bout. i. 313,
314. Lab.
131. Fain, ii.
3, 4. Gourg.
104. Chamb.
ii. 44. Claus.
150, 151.

replied, "it is in the redoubt:" and in truth the whole of that brave corps had perished in the intrenchments which it had conquered.

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During the course of the evening, intelligence was received at headquarters of the disastrous battle of Salamanca. Napoleon, though on the verge of fate himself, showed on this occasion no indulgence for the faults of his lieutenants, and bitterly inveighed against the rashness of Marmont, which had endangered all his successes in Spain. About the same time a portrait of the King of Rome was received from the Empress at Paris. At the sight of the much-loved image, the Emperor, who was tenderly attached to his son, melted into tears: the anxiety and danger of the moment were forgotten in the recollection of those he had left behind him. With his own hands he placed the picture on the outside of his tent, and called the officers and privates of his faithful Guard to share in the emotion which it had awakened in his mind. When the musketry ceased, both armies took up their positions, and the fires of the bivouacs were lighted. Those of the Russians flamed in an immense semicircle, which illuminated the half of the heavens: those of the French were more scattered and unequal, as the troops successively arrived and took up their ground. Napoleon's tent was pitched on the left of the great road, amidst the squares of the Old Guard: but he slept little, being continually occupied in despatching orders and asking questions. He could not be induced to lie down till he was assured by those on the outside, that, from the number of the shadows of moving figures which surrounded their watch-fires, it was evident that the enemy remained firm on the ground they had chosen. He passed almost all the hours of darkness in dictating orders; and it was not till midnight was far past that he could be prevailed on to take a few hours of repose. A young officer of his Guard never closed his eyes during that anxious night: Augustus Caulaincourt lay on the floor, wrapped in his cloak, with his eyes fixed on the miniature of his young bride, whom he had quitted a few days after their marriage, and whom he was never destined to see again in this world.¹ His remains lie in the "red

75.
Napoleon
receives the
account of
the battle of
Salamanca.
Night pre-
vious to the
battle.

¹ Segur,
369, 370, 384,
386. Lab.
132. Fain. i.
18, 19.

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76.
Feelings of
the soldiers
on both
sides.

monument which his good sword hath dug"* in the great redoubt on the field of Borodino.

Both armies passed a restless agitated night: so strongly had the intense anxiety of the moment come to operate on the excited frames of the soldiers. Never, in truth, in modern times, had interests so great, feelings so vehement, been brought into collision; never were such results dependent on the arm of the soldier. On the one hand was the flower of the warriors of Europe, led by the consummate talents of Napoleon, which, after having subjugated all the states of the Continent, had now penetrated beyond the old frontiers of Europe into the wilds of Asiatic rule: on the other, a nation originally sprung from the Tartar race, and but recently emerged from barbarism, singly maintained the strife against the mighty conqueror, and brought to bear against the accumulated forces of civilisation the unsubdued energy of the desert. The destinies of Europe, every one felt, hung on the contest. The battle about to be fought was the most momentous which had occurred in modern times; on its result depended whether the liberty of nations was to be maintained, or one overwhelming power was to crush all lesser states within its grasp. Still more, the moral destiny of mankind was at stake. On one side was arrayed talent, energy, perseverance, the acquisitions of science, the glories of civilisation, the wonders of discipline; but the lustre of these brilliant qualities was tarnished by the purposes to which they were applied in the hands of the conqueror; they were employed only to gild the chains of despotism, and deck out the banners of infidelity. On the other were to be seen courage, resolution, devotion, the vigour of rising civilisation, the pride of unbroken conquest, the ambition of boundless dominion. But the harsher features of these aspiring feelings were concealed by the patriotic grandeur of the cause in which they were engaged; and the sanctity of religion threw a veil over the intermixture of worldly qualities by which its cause was to be maintained.¹

The army passed, for the most part, a sleepless night; the common men being engaged in preparing their arms,

* Dryden.

¹ Chamb. ii.
52, 53.

the officers in protecting themselves from the cold, which already was severely felt at night, and in watching the Russian position to see whether a retreat was commencing. But no sound was heard along the whole line; their fires burned with a steady flame; and morning alone extinguished the light of their bivouacs. When the dawn discovered the Russian army still in their position, and it was evident that a general battle was to take place, a universal feeling of joy pervaded the French troops, and the anxiety of the men evinced itself in a general murmur throughout their lines. The fatigues of the campaign, the distance from home, the approaching dangers, were forgotten in the intense solicitude of the moment. The Emperor, at break of day, withdrew the curtains of his tent, and advancing into the middle of the circle of officers who awaited his approach, mounted on horseback, and, riding to the heights in front, surveyed the whole of the Russian position: the weakness of the left made him resolve to make the principal effort at that point, and against the redoubt in the centre. At five, the sun, breaking through a fog, appeared in cloudless splendour: "It is the sun of Austerlitz!" said Napoleon, and immediately the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, and the following proclamation was read to the troops:—"Soldiers! the battle is at hand which you have so long desired: henceforth the victory depends on yourselves. It has become necessary, and will give you abundance; good winter-quarters, and a speedy return to your country! Conduct yourselves as you did at Austerlitz, Friedland, Witepsk, and Smolensko; and let the remotest posterity recount your actions on this day: let your countrymen say of you all—he was in that great battle under the walls of Moscow." The troops heard with enthusiasm these heart-stirring words, and their shouts were re-echoed from the Russian lines.¹

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77.

Napoleon's
proclamation
to his
soldiers.

¹ Bout. i.
323. Bul-
letin, Moni-
teur,
Sept. 28,
1812. Fain,
ii. 18, 19.

Nor did the Russians neglect the most powerful means to animate the courage of their troops. On the evening of the 6th an unusual movement was observed in their position, and shortly a procession of dignified clergy, carrying an image to which miraculous powers were supposed to belong, passed through the whole lines of the army. The soldiers every where knelt before it, and

78.

Efforts of the
Russians to
animate the
spirit of their
troops.
Kutusoff's
proclama-
tion.

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mingled with the religious strains which rose from their ranks fervent prayers for their country, their families, and their religion. The priests bestowed their blessings on the prostrate army, and all, down to the meanest soldier, felt penetrated by the resolution to defend their country, or perish in the attempt.* Shortly afterwards, preceded by the venerated image, and followed by all his staff, Kutusoff himself rode along the front of the line, immediately after which the following proclamation was read to the troops:—"Brother companions in arms! You see before you in that image, the object of your pious regard, an appeal addressed to Heaven to join its aid to that of men against the tyrant who disturbs the universe. Not content with destroying millions of human beings, the images of God, that arch rebel against all laws, human and divine, has penetrated with an armed force into our sanctuaries, defiled them with blood, overturned our altars, and exposed the ark of the Lord, consecrated in that holy image of our church, to the desolation of the elements, and the profanation of impious hands. Fear not, therefore, that the Almighty, who has called that reptile from the dust by his power, should not be with you. Fear not that he will refuse to extend his buckler over your ranks, and to combat his enemy with the sword of St Michael. It is in that belief that I set out to combat, to conquer, if need be, to die—assured that my eyes shall behold victory. Soldiers! Perform your duties: think of your cities in flames; of your children who implore your protection: think of your Emperor, who considers you the strength of his arm; and to-morrow, before the sun has set, you will have traced your fidelity and faith on the soil of your country with the blood of the aggressors."¹

The sound of the prayers of the soldiers was heard in the French lines; and great was the ridicule bestowed in

¹ Chamb. ii.
51, 52. Bout.
i. 321. Fain,
ii. 11. Segur,
i. 384.

* "Va Pietro solo innanzi, e spiega al vento
Il segno riverito in Paradiso;
E segue il coro a passo grave e lento,
In duo lunghissimi ordini diviso.
Alternando facean doppio contento
In supplichevol canto, e in umil viso.

Nè s'udian trombe o suoni altri feroci;
Ma di pietate e d'umiltà sol voci."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. xi. 5, 6.*

that unbelieving host on what they deemed the mummery of the exhibition.* But the event proved that they are not the worst soldiers who are the best Christians: and the experienced observer, who reflects on the vast variety and force of the temporal stimulants to exertion which were arrayed under the standards of Napoleon, will gratefully acknowledge the wisdom which led the Russian chiefs to invoke the aid of higher influences; and discern in the principles of religion, how much soever disguised under the forms of uncivilised worship, the only power that can in the last resort withstand the shock of that concentration of worldly ambition which occasions, or is occasioned by, a revolution.

The forces on the two sides were nearly equal: but the French had a vast superiority in cavalry, and in the quality of part of their troops. The Russian force was a hundred and thirty-two thousand, with six hundred and forty pieces of artillery; but of these ten thousand were militia from Smolensko and Moscow, who had never seen service, and seven thousand were Cossacks: so that for the shock of battle they could only count on a hundred and fifteen thousand. The French force consisted of a hundred and thirty-three thousand, of whom thirty thousand were cavalry, and they brought into the field five hundred and ninety pieces of cannon.† Davoust proposed to the Emperor to move to the Russian extreme left during the night with forty thousand men; and when the battle was engaged along the whole front, to attack the redoubts suddenly in flank, and advancing rapidly from left to right of the whole Russian position, terminate the war on the field of battle.¹ But Napoleon,

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79.

Ridicule it
excited in the
French army.

80.

Forces
engaged on
both sides.
Davoust's
plan of
attack, which
is rejected by
Napoleon.

¹ Bout. i.
320. Claus.
148. Segur,
i. 328. Bout.
i. 320. Jom.
iv. 114, 117.
Gourg. i. 220.
Chamb. ii.
33. Pain, ii.
21.

* "D' in su le mura ad ammirar frattanto
Cheti si stanno e attoniti i Pagani
Que' tardi avvolgimenti, e l' umil canto,
E l' insolite pompe e i riti estrani.
Poichè cessò dello spettacolo santo
La novitate, i miseri profani
Alzar le strida; e di bestemmie e d' onte
Muggì il torrente e la gran valle e'l monte."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. xi. 12.*

† Great disputes have taken place as to the forces engaged in this memorable battle; but they are now ascertained in an authentic manner on both sides:—on that of the Russians by the official returns of Kutusoff published by Boutourlin; on that of the French from the Imperial muster-roll called on the 2d September by orders of Napoleon, and published by Chambray from the archives of the War-Office at Paris.—See BOUTOURLIN, i. 320; and CHAMBRAY, ii. 32, 33.

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deeming the detachment of so large a portion of his force hazardous at such a distance from his resources, rejected the advice. He resolved to attack by *échelon* from the right, and disposed his masses to act accordingly. Marshals Ney and Davoust led the attack, at the head of their respective corps.

81.
Russian dis-
positions for
the battle.

While these preparations were going on in the French lines, the Russians on their part were making every thing ready to oppose to them the most vigorous resistance. The village of Borodino was occupied by a strong detachment of the Imperial Guards, and may be considered as an advanced post in front of the line. The great road from Smolensko to Moscow ran perpendicularly through the centre of their position: on its right, Bagawouth and Ostermann occupied the plateau which bordered the Kolotza; the latter next the road, the former on the extreme right. On the left of Ostermann, and on the left also of the road, the massy columns of Doctoroff extended as far as the great redoubt, with the defence of which his left was charged. Beyond the redoubt, Raefskoi lay with his right resting on that bulwark, and his left on the village of Semenowskoi; while the corps of Borosdin and division of Newerofskoi, on an eminence, stretched beyond it to woods occupied by *tirailleurs*. Still farther, on the extreme left, Touczkoff had taken a position at the village of Ulitza, on the old road to Smolensko, with his own corps and the militia of Moscow, which were placed under his orders: the Imperial Guard was in reserve behind the centre. Owing to the contracted space of the ground on which both armies stood, which was not more than two miles from right to left, they were drawn up in an uncommonly close formation; so close, indeed, as to be almost without a parallel, and to render either host rather a huge close column than an army in battle array. All the corps were drawn up in two lines, with the exception of that of Touczkoff, on which, as he stood on the old road, a furious attack was anticipated, and which was in four. The whole cavalry was stationed in a third and fourth line in rear of the infantry, with the exception of one corps which was on the extreme right near the Moskwa: while the formidable artillery lined the whole front of the position.¹

¹ Bout. i. 324,
327. Chamb.
ii. 48, 49.
Claus. 151,
152.

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82.

French pre-
parations for
the attack.

On the side of the French, the preparations for attack were on a corresponding scale of magnitude. On the extreme right, Poniatowski was placed on the old road to Smolensko, opposite to Touczkoff; next to him three divisions of Davoust, still, notwithstanding all their losses, thirty thousand strong, stood near the redoubt carried on the evening of the 5th: on his left, Ney's corps was stationed, with Junot's directly in his rear, between the redoubt and the stream of the Kolotza; the heavy cavalry of the reserve was behind the wood on one side of the captured redoubt, while the whole Imperial Guard, also in reserve, was on the other. Morand's and Gerard's divisions of Davoust's corps were placed on the left of Ney and Junot, under the orders of Eugene; whose corps, with the heavy cavalry of Grouchy, formed the extreme left of the line. Thus the great bulk of the French army was concentrated round the captured redoubt; within cannon-shot of whose batteries eighty thousand veterans and three hundred guns were accumulated; and it was easy to foresee that there the principal efforts of Napoleon were to be made. The extraordinary depth and closeness of the formation of both armies, of itself explains the obstinacy of the attack and defence in the conflict which ensued, and the unparalleled loss sustained on either side.²

1 Chamb. ii.
47, 48.
Fain, ii. 17,
18. Claus.
152, 153.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 7th,* a cannon fired from one of the batteries of General Sorbier, announced the commencement of the battle. The French columns advanced in *échelon*, with the right under Davoust in front: their masses moved on steadily, without firing, under cover of their artillery, notwithstanding an incessant discharge of all arms from the Russian position. Several generals were killed as they hurried over the plain, or toiled at the foot of the intrenchments: the ground was covered by moving masses, which incessantly rolled forward to the line of flame that marked the position of the hostile batteries. General Campans

83.
Battle of
Borodino.
Sept. 7.

* It is a singular coincidence that on that day four hundred and thirty-six years, (on 7th September 1376,) the great battle of Koulikoff was fought between Dmitri, the Russian Grand Prince, and the Tartars; in which the former for the first time obtained a glorious but, as it proved in the end, fruitless triumph over their merciless oppressors. The numbers on each side were nearly the same, being one hundred and fifty thousand, on both occasions; and, what was still more singular, after both of these dreadful battles, Moscow was taken and burned.—See KARANSIN, v. 78, 83.

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1 Jom. iv.
122. Segur,
i. 390. Bout.
i. 327, 330.
Fain, ii. 23,
26. Chamb.
ii. 61, 62.

was severely wounded at the head of his division ; Rapp, who succeeded him in the command, soon shared the same fate ; Dessaix also was struck down, who succeeded Rapp ; and Davoust himself, injured by a contusion received by the fall of his horse, was for a short time disabled. The successive loss of all their chiefs for some time threw indecision into the French attack : but at length the redoubts on the left were carried. They were immediately retaken, however, by the second line of the Russians, which Bagrathion brought up to the attack : the combat continued with the utmost fury ; and Kutusoff, foreseeing that the left wing could not long withstand the repeated attacks which Napoleon directed against it, moved the corps of Bagawouth, from the right of the army, to its support.¹

84.
Partial suc-
cess of Ney
and Eugene
in the centre.

While this fierce conflict was raging on the right centre under Davoust, Ney, impatient for the fight, was still inactive in the centre. He was so near the station of Napoleon, that the Emperor's aide-de-camp called the marshal to receive his last orders. At length the moment being arrived for him to support the left of Davoust, the orders to attack the redoubts in that part of the enemy's line were given ; the drums beat, and Ney's three divisions precipitated themselves to the charge, preceded by seventy pieces of cannon ; while Murat prepared to aid them with ten thousand of his redoubtable cavalry. Soon the heads of the columns arrived in the awful tempest of canister and grape-shot ; but nothing could restrain their impetuosity. Gallantly facing the storm, they pushed on till they reached the foot of the intrenchments ; and then, breaking off to the right and left, passed between them, and entered the redoubts by the gorge. Upon this, however, Bagawouth's corps was instantly brought up from the extreme Russian right, where it lay unengaged ; and Bagrathion, putting himself at its head, not only expelled the enemy from their intrenchments, but pursued them for some distance into the plain. On the extreme right Poniatowski, in the first instance, carried Ulitza by a rapid charge ; but he was soon after arrested by Touczkoff in the woody marshes which lay around that village, where the nature of the ground would only permit tirailleurs to be employed.

Eugene, however, on the left, carried the village of Borodino, on the right bank of the Kolotza, and immediately crossing his divisions over the bridges of that stream, prepared to assail the great redoubt in the centre of the Russian line, where Barclay lay with the flower of the Russian infantry.¹

These contests, however, at this period were subordinate: it was in the right centre, where Davoust and Ney were striving for the heights of Semenowskoi, that the decisive blows were to be struck. These important heights soon became the principal objects of contention: both parties strove, by accumulating forces upon that important ridge, to gain possession of an eminence which promised to render them masters of the field. After four hours' hard fighting, Ney, finding himself overmatched by superior forces, anxiously demanded succour; and Napoleon, perceiving that the heights were still in the hands of the Russians, made preparations for a grand attack. The Young Guard, and great part of the cavalry in reserve, were sent to the support of Davoust: four hundred pieces of cannon were brought to bear upon the redoubts; while, under cover of this tremendous fire, immense columns of infantry and cavalry advanced to the assault. In vain the fire from the Russian batteries swept off whole companies as they approached; the survivors closed their ranks and advanced with a firm step and unbroken front against the rampart of death.²

Bagrathion, perceiving that the French were gradually gaining ground, ordered the whole left wing to issue from their intrenchments, leaving only the reserves to guard the works. The shock in the plain was terrible. Eighty thousand men, and seven hundred pieces of cannon, accumulated in a small space, not half a mile broad, strove with unparalleled fury for above an hour, without any perceptible advantage on either side. At length Bagrathion and the chief of his staff, St Priest, being both severely wounded, and Friant's division of Davoust's corps having assailed their flank, the Russians began to give way. General Konownitsyn, however, with admirable presence of mind, immediately assumed the command; and, drawing back his troops with their whole artillery from the disputed ridge, established them in a

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¹ Bout. i.
338, 340.
Segur, i. 398,
400. Chamb.
ii. 65, 66.
Fain, ii. 31,
34.

strong position in the rear, behind the ravine of Semenowskoi. The conquerors endeavoured to pursue their advantage, and the cavalry under Nansouty fell with the utmost fury upon the extreme left of the new Russian position; but all their efforts were defeated by the devotion of the regiments of the Russian Guard, who formed square under a tremendous fire from their abandoned works, now lined by French cannon, and for the remainder of the day maintained their ground alike against the impetuous charges of the horse and the fatal ravages of the artillery.¹

87.
The great
redoubt is
taken and
retaken.

Meanwhile an obstinate conflict was going on in the centre, where Barclay, after having lost the village of Borodino, still resolutely defended the great redoubt. The Viceroy, after having crossed the Kolotza, advanced with the utmost intrepidity through the broken ground which lay in his front, overthrew the division of General Paskewitch, and, aided by General Bonami, with his brave brigade, in the midst of the fire of eighty pieces of cannon, carried that formidable intrenchment. Kutusoff, sensible of the necessity of repairing the disaster, instantly brought forward his best troops, and, after an arduous conflict, not only retook the redoubt, and made Bonami and part of his troops prisoners, but, pursuing the broken battalions of the assailants, carried confusion and dismay into the French centre. It was at first reported at the Russian headquarters that Murat had been taken in the redoubt; and this report, though erroneous, diffused for a time extraordinary encouragement. Napoleon was anxiously solicited to support that point by the Imperial Guard; but he deemed it imprudent to risk that last reserve at so great a distance from reinforcements. After much hesitation he refused the succour, and Eugene was left for two hours to support unaided the terrible fire of the great redoubt, and the repeated charges of the Russian cavalry.²

² Segur, i.
406. 407.
Bout. i. 332.
Chamb. ii.
67, 68.
Claus. 159.

The attention of the Emperor, however, was soon arrested by a violent outcry and confusion on the left. While Bagawouth and Ostermann were traversing the field of battle from the Russian right to their left, to aid in the defence of the heights of Semenowskoi, Platoff, who had been employed with two thousand Cossacks to

discover a ford in the Kolotza on the Russian right, had passed over, and found the opposite part of the French line nearly defenceless, the troops having been all drawn to the French centre and right. He immediately despatched Prince Hesse-Philipsthal to Kutusoff, to represent that a vigorous charge of Russian horse in that quarter would probably be attended with decisive effects. This intelligence arrived just at the moment when the news of the recapture of the great redoubt had arrived; and Kutusoff accordingly despatched two thousand five hundred cavalry of the Guard, under Ouvaroff, to cross the Kolotza, and make the attack, while he covered the movement by an attack on the left flank of Eugene's corps. This irruption was attended with the most signal success. A brigade of cavalry under Ornano was speedily overthrown; soon the Cossacks passed Borodino; Delzon's Italian division only avoided destruction by throwing themselves into squares, where they resisted with great steadiness; the Viceroy escaped being made prisoner solely by taking refuge within one of the squares of infantry; the baggage and artillery drivers fled in confusion; and Napoleon himself deemed the attack so serious that he hastily galloped to the spot, accompanied by the cavalry and artillery of the Guard. It turned out, however, to be a false alarm, as Ouvaroff, unsupported by infantry, retired across the Kolotza when he found himself threatened by large bodies of the enemy. But this diversion had an important effect, and, by withdrawing a portion of the reserve destined for the attack of the great redoubt, sensibly retarded the success of the day.¹

When the Russian intrenchments, however, on the left were carried, Napoleon resolved to make a desperate effort to regain his advantages in the centre. For this purpose more than two hundred pieces of cannon were directed against the great redoubt; and while the Viceroy re-formed his divisions for the assault, Caulaincourt, in command of Montbrun's division of cuirassiers, which he had assumed as that general had just been struck down by a cannon-shot, was directed to penetrate through the Russian line, and, wheeling round, enter the intrenchment by its gorge. "You will see me immediately, dead or alive," was the answer of the brave general: he set off

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88.

Alarm on the
left by an
irruption of
Russian
cavalry.¹ Fain, ii. 32,
33. Chamb.
ii. 69, 70.
Claus. 159,
161.

89.

Grand suc-
cessful
attack on the
great
redoubt.

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at the gallop at the head of his followers, and the glittering mass was soon lost in the volumes of smoke as he approached the intrenchment. The Russians hastened, by all possible means, to support the point of attack: the corps of Ostermann was placed in front, and the noble regiments of the Guards, Preobazinski and Semenowskoi, were stationed as a reserve in their rear. Caulaincourt, advancing with the utmost rapidity, overthrew the regiments of Russian horse whom Kutusoff had opposed to him, while the great redoubt continued to vomit forth an incessant fire upon its assailants. Eugene with his infantry was advancing to the attack: the bayonets of his troops were already gleaming on its slopes, when the columns of the cuirassiers were seen ascending through the clouds of smoke which enveloped the intrenchment. Its sides seemed clothed in glittering steel; and the fire from its summit, after redoubling in fury for a few seconds, suddenly ceased. The flames of the volcano were extinguished in blood: and the resplendent casques of the French cuirassiers appeared, when the smoke cleared away, above the highest embrasures of the intrenchment.¹

The death of Caulaincourt, who met a glorious end at the entrance of the redoubt, did not prevent the French from establishing themselves in their important conquest. The Russian soldiers charged with its defence, refusing quarter, had almost all perished in the assault: and the interior presented a frightful assemblage of dismounted cannons, dying men, broken arms, and wounded horses. Grouchy, hoping to profit by the consternation which its capture had occasioned, advanced at the head of his cavalry against the corps of Ostermann, drawn up on the heights in rear; but they were met by the chasseurs of the Russian Guard, overthrown, and driven back with severe loss. Encouraged by this success, and perceiving that the French on the left of the great redoubt kept themselves at a distance to avoid the terrible fire of the Russian batteries on the heights in the rear, Kutusoff resolved to make a forward movement, in order to reoccupy the ground on which his army originally stood in the centre at the commencement of the action. Ostermann's corps, with great part of the Guard and a large body of cavalry, advanced on this perilous mission.

¹ Segur, i.
408, 409.
Lab. 144.
Bout. i. 341.
Chamb. ii.
71. Fain, ii.
34, 36.

90.
Its capture
leads to no
decisive
result.
Fresh ad-
vance of the
Russian
centre.

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Slowly and in admirable order the Russian masses moved forward under the fire of the redoubtable batteries which the French had established on the heights won, and even reached the foot of the intrenchments, where eighty pieces of cannon thundered on their close ranks, with a severity of fire unexampled in war. At the same time, their cavalry, by several gallant charges, even carried some of the redoubts, and erected the Russian standards on their old strongholds. It was all in vain: they were speedily retaken, and the Muscovite battalions, unable to advance, unwilling to retire, toiled and died for nearly two hours, at the foot of the field-works they had lost. Wearied at length with the fruitless butchery, Kutusoff drew off, covered by his immense artillery; and the Russians were again re-established along the whole line, on the heights immediately in rear of their original position.¹

¹ Chamb. ii.
71, 73. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept.
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During this terrible conflict, several portions of the French reserve had been brought into action; but the Imperial Guard, twenty thousand strong, stood motionless, like a dark thunder-cloud, in the rear. Platoff's Cossacks were still careering round the squares on the French left with extraordinary valour; but though a regiment of the Russian Guard dashed across the Kolotza and joined them without orders, yet they could effect no material advantage, when unsupported by infantry and artillery. The infantry masses were so much reduced, that not more than a third of their numbers stood erect. Meanwhile, Milaradowitch planted the Russian batteries on the heights behind the redoubts; and from this second line the fire of artillery was so severe and incessant, that the French, far from advancing to the conquest, were obliged to shelter themselves on their knees behind the intrenchments they had won. Poniatowski alone, desirous of emulating the successes of the centre, advanced in the evening against the corps of Bagawouth, which then occupied the great road to Smolensko, on the left of the Russian line; and after an obstinate struggle carried the position, from which his opponents retired to the heights occupied by Bagrathion's corps, at a short distance in the rear.²

91.
Final operations of the day.

² Claus. 164, 165. Lab. 152. Bout. i. 345, 346. Fain, ii. 37.

Thus the Russians at all points, at the close of the day,

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92.

Close of the
battle, and
unparalleled
fatigue on
both sides.

had lost their original line of defence. But, though driven from their first line, their columns, with an immense artillery, were ranged in unbroken ranks on a second position still stronger than the first; while the enemy, exhausted by an engagement of unparalleled severity, were in no condition to commence a second battle to complete their successes. The cannon continued to fire with all the vigour which the artillery-men could muster on both sides till night, but no further operations of importance were attempted: the very guns, discharged at length only at intervals by single shots, had lost their original thunder, and gave forth a hoarse and hollow tone. The cavalry, brought up on both sides to supply the vacancies of the infantry, could hardly sit on their horses, and made their attacks only in a weary trot. The very sabres were blunted by repeated strokes; the arms of the men who bore them could scarce sustain their weight.* At length the French, exhausted with fatigue and carnage, fell back to the ground they had occupied before the battle, and the Russians strengthened themselves in their new position behind the ravine of Semenowskoi.¹

¹ Bout, i. 345,
347. Segur, i.
410, 411.
Lab. 152.
Fain, ii. 36,
37. Chamb.
ii. 77, 78.
Claus. 164,
166.

93.

Magnitude
and impor-
tance of this
battle. Loss
on both sides.

Such was the terrible battle of Borodino, the most murderous and obstinately disputed of which history has preserved a record. The wars of Timour or Attila may have witnessed a greater display of physical force, and been attended by a more prodigal waste of human life; but in no previous contest were such formidable masses of disciplined forces assembled, or so gigantic an array of the implements of destruction exhibited. The armies of the whole Continent were here pitched against each other: not, as at Chalons or Tours, the fierce squadrons of invading barbarians against the tumultuary levies of feudal power; but the disciplined forces of civilised ambition against the steady firmness of regulated patriotism. The wealth of Europe was exhausted for the equipment of the expedition, its talent concentrated in the direction of its force. The whole resources of Russia were required

* “ Tutto è sangue e sudore, e un grave e spesso
Anelar gli ange il petto, e i fianchi scote.
Langue sotto lo scudo il braccio oppresso;
Gira la destra il ferro in pigre rote;
Spezza, e non taglia, e divenendo ottuso,
Perduto il brando omai di brando ha l' uso.”

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. ix. 97.*

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to oppose it, its utmost energy strained in resisting its fury. The dreadful loss on both sides demonstrated the unparalleled obstinacy of the contest. The Russians had to lament the loss of one of their bravest and ablest generals, Prince Bagrathion, who fell nobly as he defended the redoubts on the left, and subsequently died of his wounds; and of Generals Kaitaisoff and Touczkoff killed, and thirty generals of inferior rank wounded. Fifteen thousand killed, thirty thousand wounded, and two thousand prisoners, presented a total loss of nearly fifty thousand men. On the French side, besides Generals Montbrun, Caulaincourt, and many others killed, thirty generals were wounded; and the total loss was twelve thousand killed, and thirty-eight thousand wounded. The trophies of victory were equally divided; the Russians took ten pieces of cannon from their enemies, who could boast of thirteen captured from them.¹

¹ Bout. i. 349, 350.
Segur, i. 414, 422. Larrey, iv. 46. Fain, ii. 41. Claus. 170, 172.

Napoleon has been severely censured by some writers for not bringing forward the Imperial Guard towards the close of the action, in order to confirm the successes of the Viceroy and Ney. Certain it is that, in this battle, he was far from having exhibited the vigour or capacity which he had so frequently displayed on former occasions, and which had nowhere shone forth with brighter lustre than on the field of Wagram. His mental powers appear to have been in a great degree overwhelmed by the corporeal fatigue which he had recently undergone, and a painful malady which had, for the time, debilitated even his constitution of iron. A severe attack of rheumatism had deprived him of much of his former activity; and such was the state to which he was in consequence reduced, that at ten o'clock in the morning his strength required to be recruited by stimulating liquors. "He remained," says an unexceptionable eyewitness, General Mathieu Dumas, "during the engagement, on a position from whence he beheld the whole field of battle, immovable, seated on the edge of a ditch, or walking to and fro over a small space. It was not till half-past six that he mounted on horseback, and rode forward to the field, which was then strewn with dead."² The position thus chosen was so far from the theatre of action as to render correct observation with the eye impossible, and the com-

94.
Want of
vigour evinced by Napoleon in this battle.

² Souvenirs de M. Dumas, iii. 438.

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¹ Chamb. ii.
76, 77.Souv. de
Dumas, iii.
438, 439.

95.

Sound rea-
sons, never-
theless, which
prevented
him from en-
gaging his
reserves.

munication of orders frequently tardy. At the most critical moments the Emperor evinced great irresolution. He appeared struck with apathy; and it may truly be said that he proved himself inferior, on this vital occasion, both to his previous reputation and his present fortunes.¹

Notwithstanding all this, however, it may reasonably be doubted whether, had Napoleon enjoyed in this great battle all his former vigour, sound policy would have dictated any other course than that which he actually pursued. The reasons which he himself assigned to General Dumas and Count Daru, the very night of the battle, for not aiming at more decisive results, appear perfectly satisfactory.—“People will perhaps be astonished that I have not brought forward my reserves to obtain greater success; but I felt the necessity of preserving them, to strike a decisive blow in the great battle which the enemy will probably give to us in the plains in front of Moscow. The success of the action in which we have been engaged was secured; but it was my duty to think of the general result of the campaign, and it was for that that I spared my reserves.” Eight years afterwards he repeated the same opinion at St Helena. In truth, had the Guard been seriously injured at Borodino, it is doubtful if any part of the army, of which it was the heart, and of which, through every difficulty, it sustained the courage, would have repassed the Niemen. It is one thing to hazard a reserve in a situation where the loss it may sustain can easily be repaired; it is another, and a very different thing, to risk its existence in the centre of an enemy’s country, at a distance from reinforcements, when its ruin may endanger the whole army. The fatal result to the French of the battle of Waterloo, demonstrates the extreme peril of engaging the reserves before the strength of the enemy’s force has been finally broken; and the risk of a rout at Borodino was incomparably greater than on the French frontier.²

Though driven from their first line, the Russians still presented an undaunted front to the field of battle: they were masters of a strong position, defended by above six hundred pieces of cannon; and, notwithstanding their losses, seventy thousand men were still under arms. The recent advantages had been too dearly purchased to

² Dumas’s
Souvenirs, iii.
440. Gour.
244. Nap. in
Month. ii. 94.
Fain, ii. 38.

96.

Reflections
on the battle.

admit the hope of decisive success; and, if the action was renewed on the following day, no other force remained either to ensure victory or avert disaster. In truth, the battle of Borodino affords one example of a fact which was abundantly demonstrated during the remainder of the war, that when troops are naturally brave, and their courage has been improved by discipline, the superiority of generalship loses much of its importance. If large bodies of armed men lay down their arms the moment they are turned or cut off from their comrades, a skilful and vigorous attack is almost certain of success; but if they resist to the uttermost, and turn fiercely on their assailants, the peril is nearly as great to the assailing as the defending force. The attacks in column of Napoleon were frequently crowned with the most signal success against the Austrians and Prussians, but they seldom prevailed against the steady valour of the Russians, and never against the murderous fire of the English infantry.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
638.

The French army, sensible of the magnitude of their loss, passed a melancholy night after the battle. The marshals were divided as to the prudence of a farther advance. The heroic Ney himself strenuously recommended a retreat. Such was the enormous accumulation of the wounded, that they far exceeded all the resources of the French surgeons, and they lay for days together neglected on the field. The little bread which remained was soon exhausted, and the wounded were compelled to live on horse-flesh. Even straw was wanting in the convent of Kolotskoi and the neighbouring villages, which were converted into temporary hospitals, and the miserable wretches lay on the floor without either bedding or covering. During the night the Cossacks made an irruption into the lines, and the Imperial Guard were obliged to stand to their arms: a humiliating circumstance after what was held out as a decisive victory.* On the following day the Emperor visited the field; but the soldiers were too much depressed to receive him with their wonted enthusiasm. Grouped in small bodies round their eagles, stained with blood, and scorched with powder, their shouts of triumph were feebly heard amidst the cries of

97.
Distressed
condition of
the French
army at its
termination.

* "Un événement," says Segur, "assez fâcheux la veille d'une victoire."—SEGUR, I. 421.

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¹ Segur, i.
421. Larrey,
iv 57, 58.
Chamb. ii.
82, 91.

the wounded. The field of battle, over its whole extent, was strewed with dead bodies, broken guns, casques, cuirasses, and helmets, among which the wounded raised their heads to implore relief. Bleeding horses, maddened by pain, were occasionally seen moving in this scene of wo. A hoarse dull sound, like the roar of a distant cataract, alone was heard over the dismal expanse, from the groans of the wounded, or their cries for water. Great numbers of these had crept into the ravines, to seek shelter from the storm of shot, or the severity of the tempest which succeeded it; their last breath uttered the names of their country, their mother, or their offspring.^{1*}

98.
Orderly re-
treat of the
Russians to-
wards Mos-
cow.

Sept. 8.

The Russians retired, the day after the battle, on the great road to Moscow. The magnitude of their loss rendered it too hazardous to risk the remainder of the army in a general action with the French, who had been considerably reinforced since the battle. They retreated only four miles, and in such order that no pursuit was attempted. No signs of confusion appeared on their track; neither chariots, cannon, nor prisoners, attested the retreat of a broken army. A severe engagement in front of Mojaisk with the rearguard terminated, without any decisive advantage, in the loss of two thousand men to each side, and sufficiently taught the French that neither the courage nor discipline of their opponents had suffered any abatement. The good countenance preserved by this gallant rearguard on this occasion was of essential service to the Russian army; it enabled Kutusoff to retain Mojaisk till not only his whole artillery and chariots, but almost all the wounded were removed, before the town was evacuated on the following morning at ten o'clock. With such skill was the subsequent retreat conducted, that when the French arrived at the separation of the roads of Moscow and Kalouga, they were for some time uncertain, as at Witepsk, which of the two the retreating army had followed.²

² Segur, i.
423, 428.
Bout. i. 352,
356.
Chamb. ii.
87, 88, 97.
Claus. 172,
173.

* “ *Giace il cavallo al suo signore appresso :
Giace il compagno appo il compagno estinto :
Giace il nemico appo il nemico ; e spesso
Sul morto il vivo, il vincitor sul vinto.
Non v' è silenzio, e non v' è grido espresso ;
Ma odi un non so che roco e indistinto :
Fremiti di furor, mormori d' ira,
Gemiti di chi langue e di chi spira.*”

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber. xx, 51.*

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99.

Debate in the
Russian
council of war
whether they
should eva-
cuate Mos-
cow.

No further engagement of consequence took place. Napoleon, on the same day on which it was abandoned by the Russians, entered Mojaïsk, and established his headquarters in that town, while his Guard bivouacked round it, and the other corps of the army slowly followed the enemy towards the capital. The retreat was conducted in so leisurely a manner, and the pursuit was so slack, that the army was considerably re-established in its equipments and organisation after the desperate shock it had received, before it approached Moscow; and on the 13th a position was taken up half a league in advance of that city, where field-works had been commenced. Though Kutusoff at this period numbered only fifty thousand regular soldiers, with twenty thousand militia and Cossacks, round his banners, yet they were animated with the best spirit, and unanimous in the desire to fight another battle for the defence of the capital. A council of war was held to deliberate on the question whether they should adopt this bold resolution. Some were of opinion that the position they occupied was not tenable, and that they should retire to a central point between the northern and southern provinces; Benningsen and Doctoroff were clear for fighting where they stood, as they maintained the army still mustered ninety thousand men, and the loss of Moscow would spread consternation through the empire.¹

¹ Bout. i.
362. Chamb.
ii. 99, 100.

Kutusoff and Barclay supported the proposal of a retreat, assigning as a reason that it was indispensable to preserve the army entire, and draw near to the expected reinforcements; and that the abandonment of the metropolis "*would lead the enemy into a snare, where his destruction would be inevitable.*" "Notwithstanding," said Kutusoff, "the valour which my army displayed at Borodino, I was obliged, as you know, to yield to numbers, and commence my retreat. Since that time the enemy has received numerous reinforcements, and at present I have fewer chances of success than I had then; our dangers are increased by the proximity of Moscow, where I should lose half my army if it was necessary after a reverse to traverse the capital. On the other hand, if we retire without combating we must abandon it: a cruel sacrifice, it is true, but not one which draws after it the destruc-

100.

Reasons as-
signed by
Kutusoff for
abandoning
Moscow.

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¹ Mem. de
Barclay de
Tolly sur le
conseil des
Officiers Su-
perieurs
à Moscow.
Chamb. ii.
257.

tion of the empire. On the contrary, the enemy, far removed from his resources, possessing as his only communication the road from Smolensko to Moscow; on the eve of experiencing reverses on the Dwina, by the arrival of the armies of Moldavia and Finland, will find himself in the most critical situation. The army is in a bad position, and is inferior in numbers to the enemy: such were the losses which it sustained at Borodino, that entire brigades are now commanded by field-officers, and regiments by captains; hence the same precision in its movements is not perhaps to be expected as heretofore. Every thing, therefore, conspires to prove that we should be beat if we fought a battle. The safety of the country depends on the preservation of the army: a victory would not rid us of the enemy, while a disaster so near Moscow would occasion its entire destruction." These prophetic words determined the assembly, and orders were immediately given for the troops to retire in the direction of Kolomna. On the morning of the 14th, the army continued its retreat, and in silent grief defiled through the streets of the sacred city.¹

101.
Total deficiency of supplies, if known to the Russians, would have forced the French to halt and retreat. ✓

Notwithstanding these plausible, and indeed invincible reasons for a retreat, according to the information which the Russian generals possessed, nothing is more certain than that, if they had been aware of the real state of the French army, they would have stood firm, and that Napoleon, if he had hazarded a battle, would have been defeated, or driven, if he had declined it, to a disastrous retreat. Unknown to them, the French Emperor had advanced so inconsiderately, and with so little previous preparation, from Smolensko, that he was literally destitute of the means of fighting another battle. The bold front assumed by Murat and the advanced guard alone concealed the real weakness of the Grand Army, and above all its scanty supply of ammunition. All his care for the supply of the army had been confined to providing for his base at Smolensko; from that point he had plunged into the heart of Russia, with no magazines and little provisions, except what the soldiers could collect on their line of march, already wasted by the systematic devastation of the retreating enemy. At Wiazma, little more than a third of the way, the want of

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every thing had begun to be experienced ; and from that time, as they advanced onwards towards Moscow, the necessities of the troops had gone on continually increasing. The houses, to the distance of several miles on both sides of the great road, were invariably burned, either by accident or design, when the leading columns passed through ; and those which followed found the country a perfect desert. In the ruins of the dwellings, men, horses, and baggage-waggons were indiscriminately huddled together, after the manner of barbarians. The ammunition of the army was adequate only for a single battle ; and that of Borodino, where ninety-one thousand cannon-shot had been discharged, had reduced the reserve stores so low, that there did not remain enough for a second general engagement.¹

¹ Fain, li. 47.

A large convoy, it is true, had, on the 7th September, passed Smolensko ; but it could not reach the army for a fortnight to come : and it was utterly impracticable for the troops to maintain themselves in front of Mojaïsk till that supply arrived. The little bread and flour which the soldiers brought with them from Smolensko had been long ago exhausted ; the mills were all destroyed, and the grain removed : the soldiers subsisted on nothing but horse-flesh, and the few potatoes or vegetables which they could discover in the earth. Medicines for the sick, bandages and beds for the wounded, were nowhere to be found. So universal was the distress, that General Mathieu Dumas, who held the high situation of adjutant-general to the army, has declared that he regarded the burning of Moscow as an advantage, from the belief that it must force the Emperor to an immediate retreat. Had the Russians been aware of these disastrous circumstances, they would doubtless have held firm at Moscow, and Napoleon would have been driven to retire, even in sight of the prize which he so eagerly coveted. But they could not conceive that so experienced a commander would have precipitated himself three hundred miles into an enemy's country, without magazines or provisions, and with ammunition only for a single battle. Therefore they abandoned the capital ;² and to this ignorance of the real state of the French army, and consequent resolution to give up their metropolis, the total overthrow of

102.
Great distress
of the
French.

² Chamb. li.
36, 38, 78.
Fain, li. 47.
Larrey, iv.
58, 62.
Dumas,
Souv. lii. 450.

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Napoleon which ensued, is, beyond all question, to be ascribed.

103.

Universal
desertion of
the city by
the inhabi-
tants.

Nothing could exceed the consternation of the inhabitants of Moscow at finding themselves thus abandoned by their defenders. They had previously been led to believe, from the reports published by the Russian government, that the French had been defeated at Borodino, or at all events that their entry into Moscow was out of the question. No preparations, therefore, for leaving the city had been made by the inhabitants, though arrangements to that effect had been commenced by the governor, COUNT ROSTOPCHIN, whose name has acquired an immortal celebrity from the awful catastrophe which soon followed. Speedily, however, the inhabitants left the city: in that extremity they reverted at once to the nomadic life of their ancestors. In a few days, nearly three hundred thousand had departed. The troops entered the gates with dejected looks, shedding tears of despair; the streets, almost deserted by their inhabitants, mournfully re-echoed the sound of their tread; it seemed as if Russia was attending the obsequies of her metropolis. Notwithstanding the confusion of the people, however, the march of the soldiers was conducted in admirable order; and the army, abandoning the cradle of the empire, prepared in silence to avenge its fall.³

¹ Bout. i.
363, 364.
Chamb. ii.
88, 105.
Dumas,
Souv. iii. 444.

104.

Arrival of
the French at
Moscow, and
description of
that city.

At eleven o'clock on the 14th, the advanced guard of the French army, from an eminence on the road, descried the long-wished-for minarets of Moscow. The domes of above two hundred churches, and the massy summits of a thousand palaces, glittered in the rays of the sun: the form of the cupolas gave an Oriental character to the scene; but, high above all, the cross indicated the ascendancy of the European faith. The scene which presented itself to the eye resembled rather a province adorned with palaces, domes, woods, and buildings, than a single city. A boundless accumulation of houses, churches, public edifices, rivers, parks, and gardens, stretched out over swelling eminences and gentle vales as far as the eye could reach. The mixture of architectural decoration and pillared scenery, with the bright green of foliage, was peculiarly fascinating to European eyes. Every thing

announced its Oriental character, but yet without losing the features of the West. Asia and Europe meet in that extraordinary city. It resembles Rome, not in the character of its edifices or architecture, but in the strange variety of styles which are to be met with, and which at once bespeak the Queen of half the globe. Many of its palaces are of wood, coloured green, yellow, or rose, and with the exterior ornamented with sculpture in the Moorish or Arabesque style. Nowhere does luxury and magnificence appear in a more imposing form, and nowhere are they placed close beside poverty in a more humiliating aspect. The Kremlin, the ancient palace of the Czars of Muscovy, where they defended themselves alternately against the Poles and Tartars, is surrounded by a high loopholed wall, flanked by towers, which resemble rather the minarets of a Turkish mosque than the summits of a European fortress. But, how Oriental soever the character of the scene may be, the number and magnificence of the domes and churches, with their gilded cupolas and splendid crosses, tell the beholder at every step that he is in the midst of the rule of the Christian faith.^{1*}

¹ De Staël,
Dix Années
d'Exil, 281.
Chamb. ii.
111. Lab.
183. Segur,
ii. 34.
Larrey, iv.
63.

Struck by the magnificence of the spectacle, the leading squadrons halted, and exclaimed, "Moscow! Moscow!" and the cry, repeated from rank to rank, at length reached the Emperor's Guard. The soldiers, breaking their array, rushed tumultuously forward; and Napoleon, hastening in the midst of them, gazed impatiently on the splendid scene. His first words were, "Behold at last that famous city!" the next, "It was full time!" Intoxicated with joy, the army descended from the heights. The fatigues and dangers of the campaign were forgotten in the triumph of the moment; and eternal glory was anticipated in the conquest which they were about to complete. Murat, at the head of the cavalry, speedily advanced to the gates, and concluded a truce with Milaradowitch for the evacuation of the capital. But the entry of the French troops speedily dispelled the illusions in which the army had indulged. Moscow was found to be

105.
Transports of
the troops at
the sight.
The French
enter, and
find the city
deserted.

* The most graphic description of the interior of Moscow in the English language, is from the pen of the Marchioness of Londonderry, the brilliancy of which induces a feeling of regret that the noble authoress should not have recorded her observations in a more durable form than the pages of an ephemeral periodical.

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¹ Bout. i.
366, 367.
Segur, ii. 33,
36, 41. Lab.
183, 196.
Chamb. ii.
112, 117.

106.

Preparations
made by the
Russians for
burning the
city.

² Bout. i.
370. Lab.
218. Chamb.
ii. 119, 120.
Claus. 189.

deserted. Its long streets and splendid palaces resounded only with the clang of the hoofs of the invaders' horses. Not a sound was to be heard in its vast circumference: the dwellings of three hundred thousand persons seemed as silent as the wilderness. Napoleon in vain waited till evening for a deputation from the magistrates or the chief nobility. Not a human being came forward to deprecate his hostility; and the mournful truth could at length be no longer concealed, that Moscow, as if struck by enchantment, was bereft of its inhabitants. Wearied of fruitless delay, the Emperor at length advanced to the city, and entered the ancient palace of the Czars amidst no other concourse than that of his own soldiers.¹

The Russians, however, in abandoning their capital, had resolved upon a sacrifice greater than the patriotism of the world had yet exhibited. The governor, Count Rostopchin, had already set the example of devotion by preparing the means of destruction for his country palace, which he had set fire to by applying the torch with his own hands to his nuptial bed; and to the gates of the palace he had affixed a writing with the following inscription:—"During eight years I have embellished this country house, and lived happily in it, in the bosom of my family. The inhabitants of this estate, to the number of seven thousand, quit at your approach, in order that it may not be sullied by your presence. Frenchmen, at Moscow I have abandoned to you my two houses, with their furniture, worth half a million of rubles; here you will find nothing but ashes."* The nobles, in a public assembly, determined to imitate the example of the Numantians, and destroy the city they could no longer defend. The authorities, when they retired, carried with them the fire-engines, and every thing capable of arresting a conflagration; and combustibles were disposed in the principal edifices to favour the progress of the flames. The persons intrusted with the duty of setting fire to the city, only awaited the retreat of their countrymen to commence the work of destruction. Rostopchin was the author of this sublime effort of patriotic devotion;² but it involved a responsibility greater than either government

* The author received this anecdote in 1814 from the lips of Count Rostopchin himself, at Paris.—See also CHAMBRAY, ii. 271. *Pièces Just.*

or any individual could support, and he was afterwards disgraced for the heroic deed.

The sight of the grotesque towers and venerable walls of the Kremlin first revived the Emperor's imagination, and rekindled those dreams of Oriental conquest, which from his earliest years had floated in his mind. His followers, dispersed over the vast extent of the city, gazed with astonishment on the sumptuous palaces of the nobles and the gilded domes of the churches. The mixture of architectural decoration and shady foliage, of Gothic magnificence and Eastern luxury, excited the admiration of the French soldiers, more susceptible than any other people of impressions of that description. Evening came on: with increasing wonder the French troops traversed the central parts of the metropolis, recently so crowded with passengers; but not a living creature was to be seen to explain the universal desolation. It seemed like a city of the dead. Night approached; an unclouded moon illuminated those beautiful palaces—those vast hotels—those deserted streets: all was still—the silence of the tomb. The officers broke open the doors of some of the principal mansions in search of sleeping-quarters. They found every thing in perfect order; the bedrooms were fully furnished as if guests were expected; the drawing-rooms bore the marks of having been recently inhabited; even the work of the ladies was on the tables, the keys in the wardrobes; but not an inmate was to be seen. By degrees a few of the lowest class of slaves emerged, pale and trembling, from the cellars, showed the way to the sleeping apartments, and laid open every thing which these sumptuous mansions contained; but the only account they could give was that the whole inhabitants had fled, and that they alone were left in the deserted city.¹

¹ Dumas,
Souv. iii. 444,
445. Segur,
iii. 47. Lab.
184.

But the terrible catastrophe soon commenced. On the night of the 13th a fire broke out in the Bourse, behind the Bazaar, which soon consumed that noble edifice, and spread to a considerable part of the crowded streets in the vicinity. This, however, was but the prelude to more extended calamities. At midnight on the 15th a bright light was seen to illuminate the northern and western parts of the city; and the sentinels on watch at the

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Kremlin soon discerned the splendid edifices in that quarter to be in flames. The wind changed repeatedly during the night ; but to whatever quarter it veered the conflagration extended itself ; fresh fires were every instant seen breaking out in all directions ; and Moscow soon exhibited the spectacle of a sea of flame agitated by the wind. The soldiers, drowned in sleep or overcome by intoxication, were incapable of arresting its progress ; and the burning fragments, floating through the hot air, began to fall on the roofs and courts of the Kremlin. The fury of an autumnal tempest added to the horrors of the scene ; it seemed as if the wrath of heaven had combined with the vengeance of man to consume the invaders in the city they had conquered.¹

¹ Lab. 209.
Segur, ii. 48,
51. Dumas,
Souv. iii. 447,
448. Chamb.
ii. 119, 120.
Larrey, iv.
72, 73.

109.
Awful appearance
during the
following
night.

But it was chiefly during the night of the 18th and 19th that the conflagration attained its greatest violence. At that time the whole city was wrapped in flames ; and volumes of fire of various colours ascended to the heavens in many places, diffusing a prodigious light on all sides, and attended by an intolerable heat. These balloons of flame were accompanied in their ascent by a frightful hissing noise and loud explosions, the effect of the vast stores of oil, tar, resin, spirits, and other combustible materials, with which the greater part of the shops were filled. Large pieces of painted canvass, unrolled from the outside of the buildings by the violence of the heat, floated on fire in the atmosphere, and sent down on all sides a flaming shower, which spread the conflagration in quarters even the most removed from those where it originally commenced. The wind, naturally high, was raised, by the sudden rarefaction of the air produced by the heat, to a perfect hurricane. The howling of the tempest drowned even the roar of the conflagration ; the whole heavens were filled with the whirl of the burning volumes of smoke, which rose on all sides, and made midnight as bright as day ;* while even the bravest hearts, subdued by the sublimity of the scene, and the feeling of human impotence in the midst of such elemental strife, sank and trembled in silence.²

² Larrey, iv.
73, 74.
Dumas,
Souv. iii. 449,
450.

The return of day did not diminish the terrors of the

* "At the distance of three quarters of a league from Moscow, I could, at midnight, read the despatches which the major-general of the army addressed to me."—DUMAS, *Souvenirs*, iii. 450,

conflagration. An immense crowd of hitherto unseen people, who had taken refuge in the cellars or vaults of the buildings, issued forth as the flames reached their dwellings: the streets were speedily filled with multitudes flying in every direction with the most precious articles of their furniture; while the French army, whose discipline this fatal event had entirely dissolved, assembled in drunken crowds, and loaded themselves with the spoils of the city. Never in modern times had such a scene been witnessed. The men were loaded with packages, charged with their most precious effects, which often took fire as they were carried along, and which they were obliged to throw down to save themselves. The women had generally two or three children on their backs, and as many led by the hand, which, with trembling steps and piteous cries, sought their devious way through the labyrinth of flame. Many old men, unable to walk, were drawn on hurdles or wheelbarrows by their children and grandchildren, while their burnt beards and smoking garments showed with what difficulty they had been rescued from the flames. Often the French soldiers, tormented by hunger and thirst, and loosened from all discipline by the horrors which surrounded them, not contented with the booty in the streets, rushed headlong into the burning edifices to ransack their cellars for the stores of wine and spirits which they contained, and beneath the ruins great numbers perished miserably, the victims of intemperance and the surrounding fire. Meanwhile the flames, fanned by a tempestuous gale, advanced with frightful rapidity, devouring alike in their course the palaces of the great, the temples of religion, and the cottages of the poor. For thirty-six hours the conflagration continued at its height, and during that time above nine-tenths of the city was destroyed. The remainder, abandoned to pillage and deserted by its inhabitants, offered no resources for the army. Moscow had been conquered; but the victors had gained only a heap of ruins.¹

The Emperor long clung to the Kremlin, in the hope that the cessation of the fire would enable him to retain his long-wished-for conquest. But at length, on the 16th, the conflagration had spread in every direction: the horizon seemed a vast ocean of flame, and the cry arose

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110.

Consternation and disorder in the city.

¹ Lab. 210,
211. Segur,
ii. 49, 52.
Chamb. ii.
121, 122.
Larrey, iv.
75, 76. Bout.
i. 370.
Gourg. ii.
276.

111.

Napoleon at length leaves the Kremlin.

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that the Kremlin itself was on fire. He gave vent to his rage by commanding the massacre of the unfortunate men who had been intrusted with the duty of commencing the conflagration, and, yielding to the solicitations of his followers, abandoned the Kremlin. The wind and the rush of the flames was so violent, that Berthier was almost swept away by their fury; but the Emperor and his followers arrived in safety before night at the country palace of Petrowsky. General Mathieu Dumas and Count Daru, who were among the last that left the Kremlin, could scarcely bear the intense heat as they rode along the quay to follow the Emperor; and on leaving it their horses were with difficulty brought to pass between two burning houses at the entrance of the street, which formed the sole issue that remained to them. Arrived at length at Petrowsky, they had leisure to contemplate the awful spectacle which was presented by the conflagration. Early on the following morning, Napoleon cast a melancholy look to the burning city, which now filled half the heavens with its flames, and exclaimed, after a long silence—"This sad event is the presage of a long train of disasters!"¹

¹ Segur, ii. 55, 59.
Gour. 274.
Dum. Souv. iii. 449, 450.
Chamb. ii. 121. Bulletin, Moniteur, Sept. 4, 1812.

112.
Horrors of Moscow after the fire had ceased.

Imagination cannot conceive the horrors into which the remnant of the people who could not abandon their homes, were plunged by this unparalleled sacrifice. Bereft of every thing, they wandered amidst the ruins, eagerly searching for a parent or an infant amidst the smoking heaps; pillage became universal, and from the scene of devastation, the wrecks of former magnificence were ransacked alike by the licentious soldiery and the suffering multitude. The city, abandoned to pillage, was speedily filled with marauders; and, in addition to the whole French army, numbers flocked in from the country to share in the general license. Furniture of the most precious description, splendid jewellery, Indian and Turkish stuffs, stores of wine and brandy, gold and silver plate, rich furs, gorgeous trappings of silk and satin, were spread about in promiscuous confusion, and became the prey of the least intoxicated among the multitude. A frightful tumult succeeded to the stillness which had reigned in the city when the troops first entered it. The cries of the pillaged inhabitants, the coarse imprecations of the soldiers, were mingled with

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the lamentations of those who had lost their parents, their children, their all, in the conflagration. Pillage became universal in those days of unrestrained license: the same place often beheld the general's uniform and the soldier's humble garments in search of plunder. The ground, in the parts which had been consumed, was covered with a motley group of soldiers, peasants, and marauders of all countries and aspects, who sought in the smoking ruins the remains of the precious articles which they formerly contained. The church of St Michael, which covered the tombs of the Emperors of Russia, did not escape their sacrilegious violence; but no treasures were found to reward the cupidity of the depredators. The shouts of the marauders were interrupted by the shrieks of the victims of military license, and occasionally drowned in the roar of the conflagration; while not the least extraordinary part of the clamour arose from the howling of the dogs, which, being chained to the gates of the palaces, were consumed in the flames with which they were surrounded.¹

¹ Lab. 211,
215. Segur,
ii. 67.
Chamb. ii.
123, 126.

113.
Semicircular
march of the
Russian
army round
Moscow.

While these terrible scenes were passing in the metropolis, the Russian army retired on the road to Kolomna, and after falling back two marches in that direction, wheeled to the left, and by a semicircular march regained the route to Kalouga, in the neighbourhood of the Smolensko road. By this masterly movement, Kutusoff at once drew near to his reinforcements, covered the richest provinces of the empire, secured the supplies of the army, and threatened the communications of the enemy. The city of Kalouga, stored with ample magazines, served as the base of the future operations of the army. The camp at Taroutino, where he took post, was speedily filled with provisions; and the multitude of recruits who daily arrived from the southern provinces restored the spirits of the soldiers. Placed on the central route between Moscow and Kalouga, this position enabled the Russians to defend all the avenues to that important city; and, at the same time, to reap the benefit of all the supplies which these provinces, by far the richest in grain in the whole empire, afforded. The event soon showed of what consequence the admirable selection of this station was to the future success of the campaign.²

² Jom. iv.
152. Bout. i
375, 384.

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114.
Feelings of
the soldiers in
the Russian
army on this
occasion.

In making this circular march, the troops were filled with the most melancholy feelings. The fugitives from the metropolis had already spread the intelligence of the fire; and the lurid light which filled one half of the heavens, attested too plainly the truth of their tale. The roar of the flames, and the fury of the tempest, occasioned by the extraordinary heat of so large a portion of the atmosphere, was heard even at so great a distance; and as the troops marched at night, their steps were guided by the glare of the conflagration. Only one feeling pervaded every breast, that of profound and ineffaceable indignation; one only passion animated every bosom, that of stern and collected vengeance. The burning of the holy city had effaced all lighter feelings, and impressed a religious solemnity on that memorable march. Words there were none spoken in the vast array; the hearts of all were too big for utterance; the tread of the men alone was heard from the ranks; but the silent tears which trickled down the cheek, and the glance of fire which was turned towards the heavens, bespoke the deep determination that was felt. Silent and mournful they continued their way, interrupted only by the burning fragments which occasionally fell among their ranks, and for a moment illuminated the stern visages of the soldiers. They left behind them their palaces and their temples; monuments of art and miracles of luxury; the remains of ages which had passed away, and of those which were yet unfinished; the tombs of their ancestors and the cradles of their descendants. Nothing remained of Moscow but the remembrance of the city and the resolution to avenge it.*¹

¹ Guil. de
Vaud. i. 209.
Segur, ii. 72.
Claus. i. 88.

* Karamsin.

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

Note A, p. 35.

General State of the French Army.—May 15, 1812.

	Present under arms.		Detached.		Hospital.		Total.	
	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Horses.	Men.	Men.	Cavalry.	Artillery.
Armee du Midi,	56,031	12,101	2,787	660	4,652	63,470	7,311	4,340
— du Centre,	17,395	4,208	158	37	766	19,203	3,332	420
— de Portugal,	52,618	7,244	9,750	1,538	8,382	70,700	4,481	3,448
— d'Aragon,	27,218	4,768	4,458	605	8,701	35,377	2,976	1,980
— de Catalogne,	33,677	1,577	1,844	267	6,009	41,530	1,376	279
— du Nord,	33,771	6,031	2,560	271	7,767	49,098	4,443	1,163
Total,	225,710	35,929	21,557	3,378	31,227	279,378	23,919	11,630
Old reserve at Bayonne,	3,294	221	1,642	—	964	6,500	207	—
New reserve at Bayonne,	2,598	116	3,176	—	5	5,769	103	—
General Total,	232,202	36,266	26,375	3,378	32,196	291,647	24,229	11,630

—NAPIER, v. 618.

CHAPTER LXXI.

Note A, p. 275.

Force of the French Army which entered Russia in 1812, from the Imperial Muster-Rolls.

INFANTRY.

Generals.	General Staff.	Date of entering Russian territory.	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Horses.
Berthier,	1st Corps,	June 24, 1812,	3,075	908	1,748
Davoust,	2d do.	Idem,	68,627	3,424	11,417
Oudinot,	2d do.	Idem,	34,299	2,840	7,331
Ney,	3d do.	Idem,	35,755	3,587	8,039
Eugene,	4th do.	June 30, 1812,	42,430	2,368	10,057
Poniatowski,	5th do.	June 24, 1812,	32,159	4,152	9,438
Gouvion St Cyr,	6th do.	July 1, 1812,	23,228	1,906	3,699
Reynier,	7th do.	June 24, 1812,	15,003	2,186	5,582
Vandamme,	8th do.	Idem,	15,885	2,050	3,477
Victor,	9th do.	Sep. 3, 1812,	31,633	1,904	4,081
Macdonald,	10th do.	June 24, 1812,	30,023	2,474	6,285
Schwartzenberg,	Austrian do.	Idem,	26,830	7,318	13,126
Napoleon,	Imperial Guard.	Idem,	41,094	6,279	16,322

CAVALRY.

Generals.	General Staff.	Date of entering Russian territory.	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Horses.
Nansouty,	1st Corps,	June 24, 1812,	—	12,077	13,014
Montbrun,	2d do.	Idem,	—	10,436	11,125
Grouchy,	3d do.	Idem,	—	9,676	10,451
Latour-Maubourg,	4th do.	Idem,	—	7,994	8,766
Durutte,	Division Durutte,	Nov. 2, 1812,	13,592	—	76
Loison,	Division Loison,	Nov. 18, 1812,	13,290	—	412
	{ Troops sent	{ different dates,	65,000	15,000	20,000
	{ during the campaign,				
Total,			491,953	96,579	164,446

RECAPITULATION.

	Men	Horses.
Infantry,	491,953	} 164,446
Cavalry,	96,579	
Add—Portions of the Artillery, Engineers, and Military Equipments,	21,526	18,265
Total who entered the Russian Territory,	610,058	182,711
Add—Number of men and horses absent, but who rejoined the Army during the Campaign,	37,100	4,400
Total effective force who entered the Russian territory,	647,158	187,111
Total Guns,	1,372	
—Imperial Muster-Rolls, given in CHAMBRAY, vol. i. App. No. 2.		

Note B, p. 276.

Force of the Russian army opposed to Napoleon at the commencement of hostilities.

BARCLAY DE TOLLY, Commander of the First Army of the West.

Generals.	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Artillery.	Cossacks
Wittgenstein,	20,664	2416	2940	1500
Bagawouth,	17,712	1208	1715	—
Touczkoff	19,188	946	1715	500
Schouvaloff,	16,236	1208	1470	—
Grand-duke Constantine,	19,682	3084	1715	—
Doctoroff,	17,712	1208	1715	—
Ouvaroff,	—	3720	245	—
Korff,	—	3624	980	—
Pahlen,	—	3020	245	—
Platoff,	—	—	245	7000
Total,	111,104	20,434	12,985	9000

PRINCE BAGRATHION, Commander of the Second Army of the West.

Raefskoi,	17,712	1208	1715	—
Borosdin,	16,236	3020	1225	—
Siewers,	—	3624	980	—
Neweroffskoi,	8,856	—	—	—
Ilowaiskoi,	—	—	245	4500
Total,	42,804	7852	4165	4500

TORMASOFF, Commander of the Third Army of the West.

	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Artillery.	Cossacks.
Kamenskoi, . . .	13,284	1208	980	—
Markoff, . . .	17,712	1208	980	—
Sacken, . . .	4,000	2000	490	—
Lambert, . . .	—	5436	735	—
Total,	34,996	9852	3185	4500

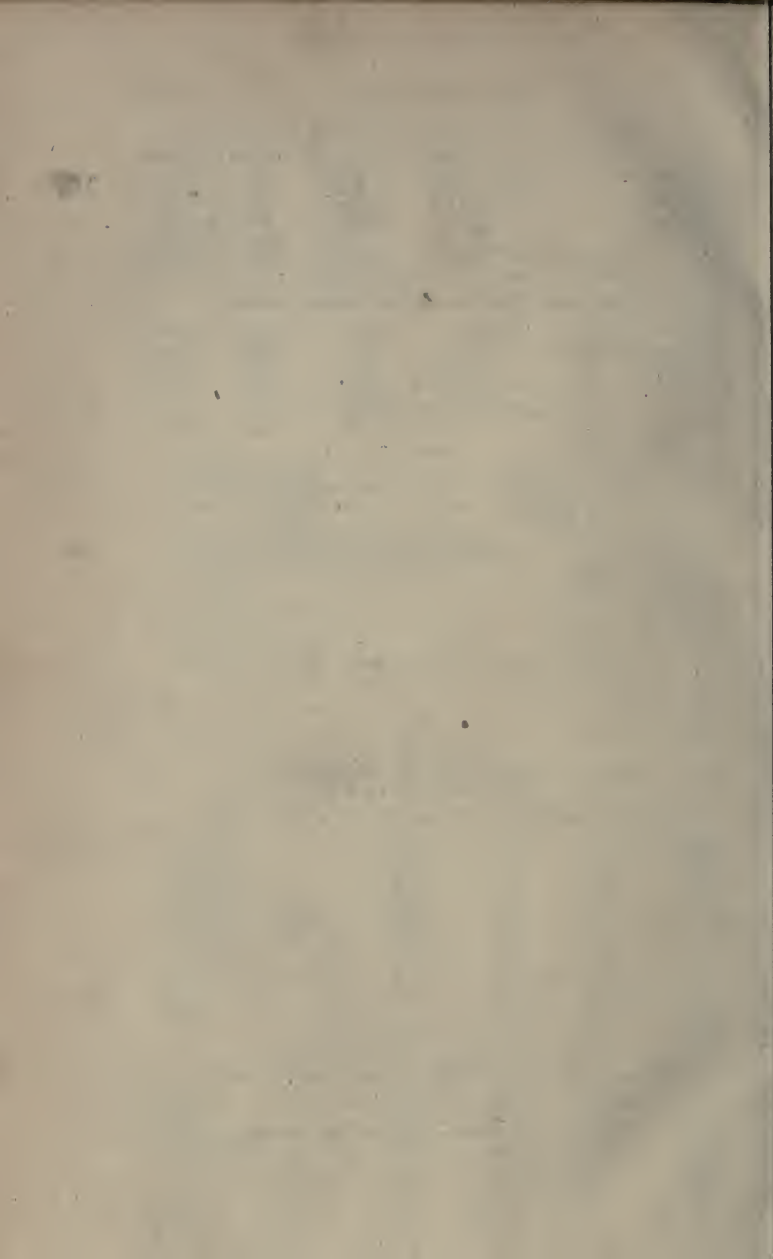
RECAPITULATION OF THE WHOLE ARMY.

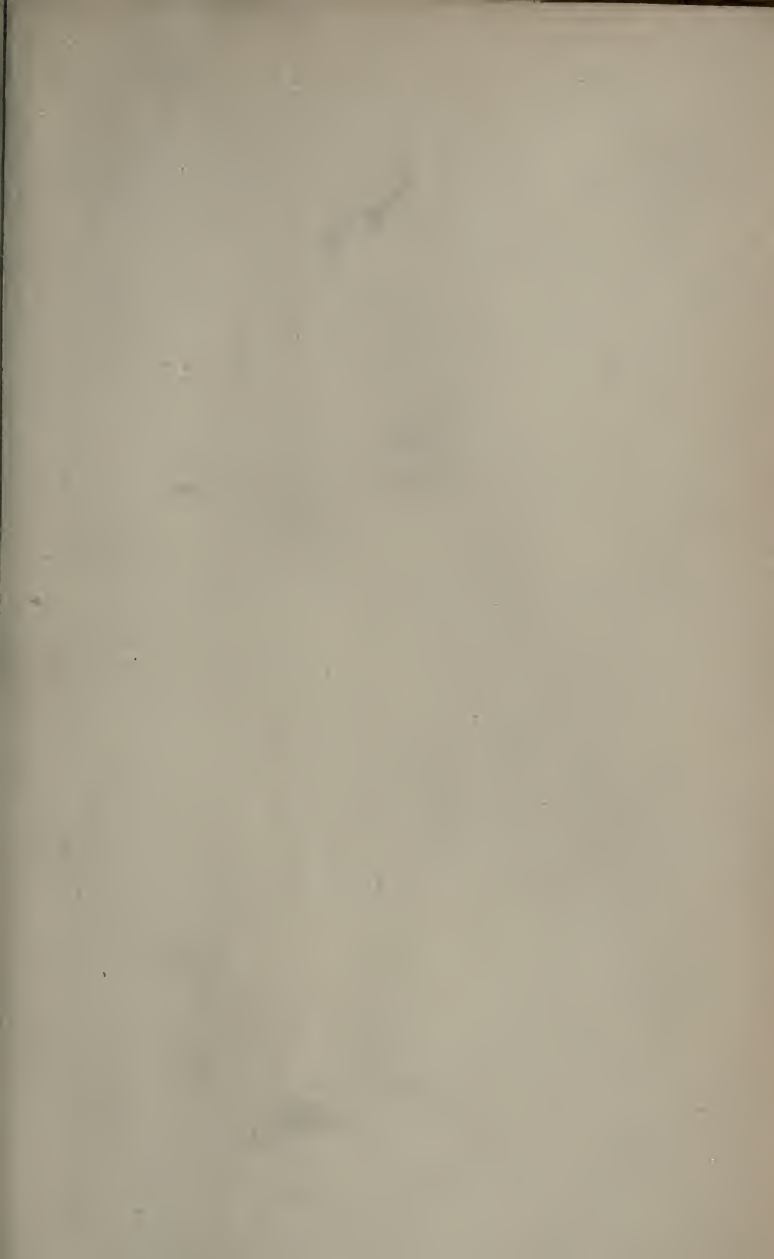
	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Artillery.	Cossacks.
First Army of the West, . . .	111,194	20,434	12,985	9000
Second — — . . .	42,804	7,852	4,165	4500
Third — — . . .	34,996	9,852	3,185	4500
Grand Total,	188,994	38,138	20,335	18,000

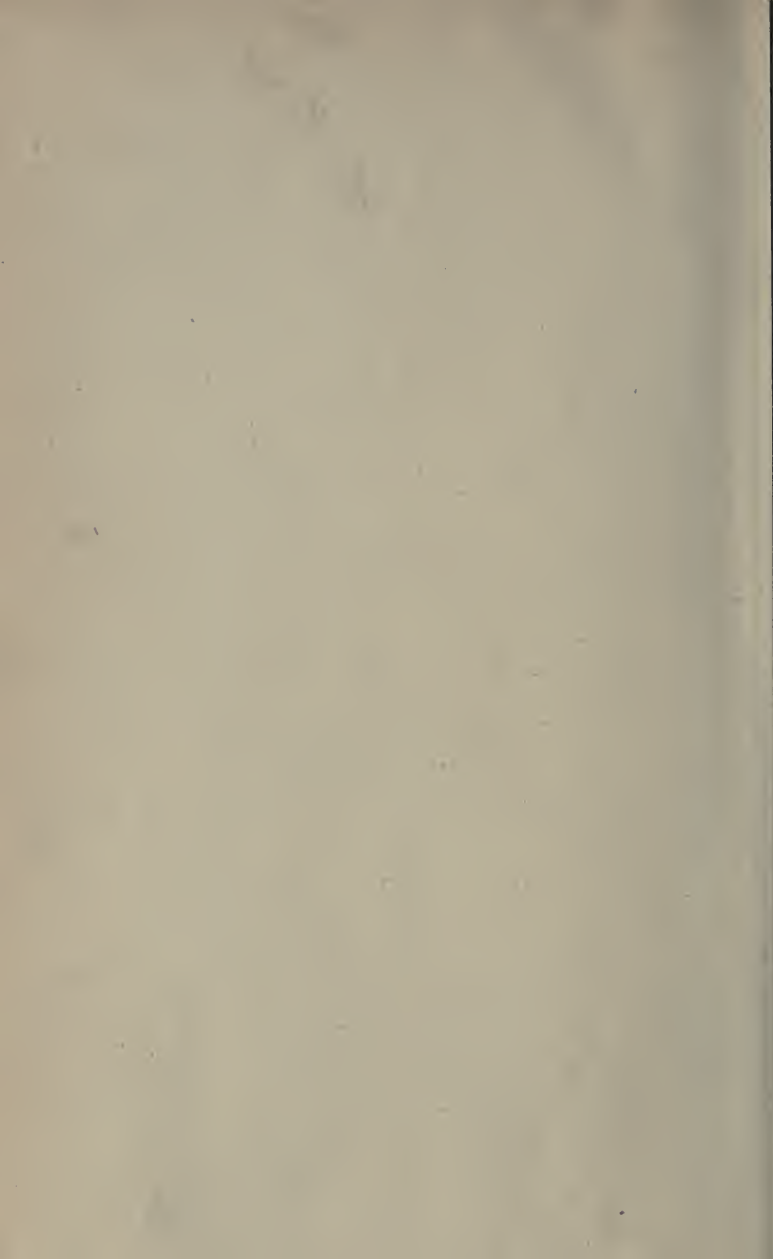
SUMMARY.

Infantry,	188,994
Cavalry,	38,138
Artillery,	20,335
Cossacks,	18,000
Total,	265,467

END OF VOLUME XV.









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